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Changing the Paradigm in Strengthening School-Community Partnerships: Culturally Relevant Afterschool Programs Providing Professional Development to Classroom Teachers

Tyra Good

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CHANGING THE PARADIGM IN STRENGTHENING SCHOOL-FAMILY
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS: AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS SERVING AS
CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LEARNING COMMUNITIES TO IN-SERVICE
TEACHERS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Education

Interdisciplinary Doctoral Degree for Educational Leadership

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Education

By

Tyra L. Good

December 2013

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Tyra L. Good

2013

Duquesne University
School of Education
INTERDISCIPLINARY DOCTORAL PROGRAM FOR
EDUCATIONAL LEADERS

Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Doctor of Education (Ed.D.)

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September 19, 2013

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AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS SERVING AS CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LEARNING COMMUNITIES
TO IN-SERVICE TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

CHANGING THE PARADIGM IN STRENGTHENING SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS: CULTURALLY RELEVANT AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS PROVIDING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TO CLASSROOM TEACHERS

By

Tyra L. Good

December 2013

Dissertation supervised by Gretchen Generett, Ph.D.

This research study focused on culturally responsive teaching instruction supported and developed through less formal learning and teaching environments. Eight in-service teachers shared their beliefs, personal narratives, and culturally responsive teaching practices in educating African American youth attending a quality afterschool program in an underserved community. Three research questions guided this qualitative case study and the results were discussed according to the three themes that emerged through the theoretical frames of culturally responsive pedagogy (Erickson, 1987, Gay, 2000, 2002) and Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The themes that emerged as a result of the analysis are as follows: (a) Afterschool Programs Makes a Difference: Provides Extra Learning Opportunities, Mentorship, and an Avenue to grapple with Understanding Youth's Community and Family Origins; (b) Breaking Barriers: Building Relationships with Students

Through Strategies Learned via Personal Interaction and Professional Development Trainings;

(c) Sharing Personal and Professional Career Path to Becoming a Teacher: Lessons Learned.

This dissertation study addresses a gap in the extant literature of afterschool programs bridging the gap between school, family, and community partnerships, in forming in-service teachers' knowledge learning development. Learning in the informal and relaxed afterschool environment allows the in-service teachers to be in the context of a community setting while given the opportunity to be creative, explore new teaching concepts, interact with parents, and to develop healthy and meaningful relationships with the youth. The narratives and themes give voice to the in-service teachers' beliefs, upbringing, and of their culturally responsive teaching instruction supported and developed through working with African American students from underserved communities in a quality afterschool program.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated first and foremost to my immediate family. To my mother, Joan Faith Pollard-Raiford, for her prayers, faith, strong-will, and love that helped me to persevere through this process: You are my true guardian Angel. To the loving memory of my father, Tyrone Lecelle Good, Sr., who loved me unconditionally: I will always be your Sugar! To my brothers, Tyrone Lecelle Good, Jr. and Omar Phillip Good, who were always there for me and constantly asked me, “Are you finished with your paper, yet?” To my sister Shawna Dark, who supported me along the way with her prayers and positive reflections. And to my son, DeAndre Omar Lecelle Bailey, who endured every step of this journey with me from late nights to long hours in the library: The ultimate sacrifice is for you. Also, to the loving memories of both my maternal grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Pollard, and my paternal grandparents, Mr. and Mr. Good, who always told me they were proud of me and to finish school.

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I would also like to acknowledge, my department chair, Dr. Jim Henderson and his wife Dr. Terri Henderson for providing great mentorship both academically and professionally and pushing me to get finished. To Dr. Ian Edwards for counseling me through this process both emotionally and mentally and for allowing me to safely unmask. Thank you to Drs. Ron Brown and Taunya Tinsley for being servant mentors from the very infancy stage of the application process to this program until now. Your constant support and words of inspiration mean the world to me. I would also like to acknowledge and thank my church family, Warriors of Holiness in Power, specifically my pastors, James and Denise Samuel, for their continued prayers and words of wisdom. To my friends, Courtney, Sean and Kelly for being great life coaches and giving me motivational support to push me through to the finish line. And finally, to my family and friends who rooted for me along the way and giving me the space to finish this portion of the journey.

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CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

Introduction

In his book, *Community Life in Democracy*, William Carr (1942) writes about schools being separated from the community by a moat, and drawbridges being lowered so the children of the mainland can go out to the island to learn how to live in the mainland. Carr (1942) describes how the children go out to the island (schools) to learn about how to live in the mainland (communities). On this island, the children are given books explaining how to live successfully on the mainland and then they are tested on their knowledge retention. Carr further explains that some of the more privileged children are provided a reward to tour the mainland.

In essence, this now famous writing on schools as islands is about the relationship between schools and communities. How many schools today have a moat that children must cross each morning that keeps them apart from the mainland community? What can be done to bridge schools and communities to enhance student and teacher learning? How can this scenario of representing schools, communities, and the field of education, be restructured to integrate relevant school curriculum? Can this scenario be reframed from a deficit approach to an affirming approach in which the drawbridge symbolizes a bridge of hope for schools and communities to collaborate in expanding engaged learning opportunities for teachers, students and the community?

I believe that quality afterschool programs are uniquely positioned to be that bridge of hope for schools and communities, including the parents of the students, in supporting student learning by providing academic enrichment, cultural and recreational activities, and a safe nurturing environment. The Education Broadcasting Corporation

(2004) defines quality afterschool programs as (a) community-driven; (b) expanded learning opportunities that support developmentally appropriate cognitive; (c) social; (d) physical; (e) and emotional outcomes. In addition, these programs offer a balanced program of academic support, arts and cultural enrichment, recreation, and nutrition. The term afterschool is sometimes referred to as out-of-school time (OST). In, *Making an Impact on Out-of-School (2000)*, the National Institute on Out-Of-School Time, (NIOST) defines out-of-school programs as “encompassing a wide range of program offerings for young people that take place, before school, afterschool, on weekends, and during the summer and other school breaks”. Categories within the field often include school-aged childcare, afterschool programs, and positive youth development (Peter, 2002). The depth and breadth of the differences of afterschool programs and OST programs will be discussed further in Chapter 2. For the purposes of this dissertation study I will use afterschool programs and out-school-time programs interchangeable.

Quality Afterschool Programs as Contextual Cultural Setting

Quality afterschool programs can be a way for classroom teachers to learn more about their students’ social and family backgrounds. Furthermore, quality afterschool programs can provide the contextual setting for classroom teachers to explore, navigate, and make meaning of their students’ lived cultural experiences.

In looking at terms to describe the relationship between teaching and culture, Ladson-Billings in “Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy” (1995), noted the term culturally responsive appears to refer to a more dynamic or synergistic relationship between home/community culture and school culture (pg. 467). In explaining this further, Ladson-Billings used an example quoted by Erickson and Mohatt

(1982) in their suggestion that culturally responsive teaching can be seen as a beginning step for bridging the gap between home and school:

It may well be that, by discovering the small differences in social relations which make a big difference in the interactional ways children engage the content of school curriculum, anthropologists can make practical contributions to the improvement of minority children's school achievement and to the improvement of the everyday school life for such children and their teachers. Making small changes in everyday participation structures may be one of the means by which more culturally responsive pedagogy can be developed (p. 170).

Moreover, in their book, *Educating Culturally Responsive Teachers: A Coherent Approach*, Villegas and Lucas (2002) state:

“...the overriding role of the teacher is to help students build bridges between their prior knowledge and experiences and the new ideas to be learned. This involves drawing on students' strengths, challenging their misconceptions, embedding, new ideas in problem-solving activities that are relevant and meaningful to the children, explaining new concepts with illustrations or examples taken from their everyday lives, and providing opportunities for them to display what they know about the topic at hand in ways that are familiar to them, among other strategies. To build these types of bridges to learning teachers need to know their students well” (p. 79).

Learning about life in the communities in which students live, being knowledgeable about how community members perceive schools, and knowing what is taught in schools, gives teachers considerable insight into the ways in which community residents, including the children they teach, make sense of their experiences (Villegas & Lucas, 2002, p. 86). Community-based afterschool programs provide a means to bridge the gap between what families and schools can provide in the form of guidance, skills and a pathway to achieving educational and life goals, especially for low-income youth who find few opportunities in the traditional institutions within their neighborhoods (Bridgall, 2005).

Purpose of the Research

School-family-community partnerships is a strategy that promotes collaboration among students, families, communities, and school leaders to achieve school excellence and student success (Sanders, 2009). School-family-community partnerships provides the background context for the purpose of this dissertation study. The primary focus of this study is on in-service teachers' culturally responsive teaching instruction supported and developed through less formal learning and teaching environments. Specifically, I looked at teachers' beliefs, personal narratives, and culturally responsive teaching practices in educating African American youth attending a quality afterschool program in an underserved community. Furthermore, this work investigates whether or not quality afterschool programs attended by African American students from underserved communities can serve as a professional learning community to assist in the development of in-service teachers' culturally responsive pedagogy. This study will add a new perspective to school-family-community partnerships by focusing on classroom teachers

rather than the students to improve the educational achievement gap of African American students through quality afterschool programs.

Researcher's narrative. I gained interest in this topic after reflecting upon school and life experiences that have influenced my professional career path. According to societal statistics, I was destined to be a high-school dropout or a teenage parent on government assistance all because I grew up poor and in an urban environment to unwed parents. Contrarily, I graduated magna cum laude from both a historically black institution located on the east coast, where I obtained my Bachelors degree, and from a small liberal arts college located on the north east coast, where I obtained my Masters degree. I beat the odds and feel that I must give back to my community as a model of resiliency for African American youth illustrating that it is possible to succeed through hard work, mentorship, and dedication in the face of adversity (Howell, 2004).

While trends of low-academic performance and disengagement in school among students of color are often tied to multiple factors, a key contributing factor in school and collegiate classrooms found to affect the educational experiences of students of color across the P-20 education pipeline are their classroom experiences (Dancy & Horsford, 2010). As noted by Dancy and Horsford (2010), Stovall (2005):

“gathered information over a ten-week period from a group of “low-income”, “at risk”, academically challenged “middle-tier” students of color from a school in Chicago’s South Side. The students were required to complete a video project and writing assignment based on questions concerning their lives. Findings suggest that how these students portrayed themselves (i.e., drug dealers, gang members, pregnant mothers on welfare) indicated how they perceive their

place in the larger society. When multicultural or urban education was included into the academic experience, both self-identity and likelihood of retention increased among students of color” (p. 159).

Through my experience of being educated in a public school system located in a mid-sized north eastern state and attending a historically black institution, I began to realize that there was a huge gap between what was being taught in the formal K-12 public school systems and what the “real world” expected you to know. I had always received high honors in my scholar classes and participated in academic clubs. I guess you can say I thought was INTELLIGENT by measure of the school system standards. However, I scored less than 800 on the Scholastic Assessment Test all three times of taking the test, in spite of enrolling in two preparatory courses. There is no way I should have made straight A’s and failed to score above 1000 on the SAT. What factors contributed to my low standardized test scores? Were the tests culturally bias? Were there other factors affecting the academic success of my ethnic peers? I was puzzled. I was always told that I was smart and I did exceptionally well in school. Something was wrong. Something did not add up. Nonetheless, I graduated number four in my high school graduating class and went on to undergraduate studies. In undergrad, I was placed in advanced calculus, but had to take a remedial reading course before freshman English. Again, I asked myself how could this be? I felt like I was lost in the crowd and surrounded by the “real” intelligent people. I began to doubt myself and feel inadequate to the other students. I became ANGRY! Angry at my teachers for passing me! Angry at the public school system for failing to educate me in reading and language arts! Angry at my family for not pushing me harder! In actuality, the scholar classes that I had taken in

middle and high school should have been the mainstream classes. I felt cheated! And, what about the students in the mainstream classes? They were even more left behind.

Dancy & Horsford (2010) explains that as students representing diverse backgrounds and experiences progress along the P-20 educational pipeline, they often become aware of irrational and unjust aspects of society demonstrated by their schooling experiences (p. 153). This experience instilled in me a passion for education, particularly in educating African American youth from underserved communities. When examining the state of Black education, one must look further and deeper than what is on the surface: poor attendance, low grades, low standardized test scores, and unsatisfactory behavior. In order to really address and conquer the problem, educators must look at the factors contributing to these issues.

Using the lens of culturally responsive pedagogy, one will recognize two key factors that contribute to the low academic achievement of students of color and the achievement gap between students of color and white students. This can be explained as the cultural disconnection between schools and low-income students, students of color, and failure by schools and teachers to reflect or draw on the cultural and language strengths of these students (Gay, 2000). While more than half of young people are becoming college graduates in many European and Asian nations, fewer than 40 percent of American young people – and fewer than 20 percent of African American and Hispanic youth receive a college degree (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

Despite the fact that African Americans are the majority of students enrolled in the inner-city public school system that I graduated from, today majority of high school diplomas are awarded to Whites. Similarly, a higher percentage of white men, 34% and

white women, 44% receive bachelor's degree than African Americans, in the greater city region surrounding that public school system (Racial Demographics: Differences and Disparities, 2007). These data show that it is especially important that schools, families, community residents, business professionals and government professionals come together to advocate for the well-being and educational success of African American students.

My personal narrative inspired me to seek and nurture school-family-community partnerships in education that ensures success for all students and educational leaders. I consider myself to be a critical grass roots educator, as illustrated in the narrative that follows. Professionally, I am a pioneer in developing and advocating for quality afterschool programs and services to benefit youth from underserved communities and forging community partnerships to share best practices, which foster and enable future student success. Being a critical educator in a multicultural environment means that you have to be able to adapt your curriculum instruction and delivery to reach youth from a myriad of backgrounds.

My love for the field of education is more than just a profession, but a true sense of self-identity, passion, and a call to ministry. Defining my work as a ministry is articulated in the social and historical context of African American educators. As Dantely (2010) explains, it is from one's spirituality that compassion, a sense of equity, understanding and passion toward others, as well as life's work to which one has been "called" emanate. Furthermore, Emmons (1999) defined spirituality as "a search for meaning, for unity, for connectedness, for transcendence, for the highest of human potential" (p. 92). Spirituality is the instrument in our lives through which we build connectivity and community with others. Spirituality differs from religion in that religion

is an institutionalized space where spirituality may be nurtured and celebrated (Dantley, 2010). Passion can be found in these spiritual celebrations.

Through school-family-community partnerships, I am committed to shaping the minds and destinies of African American youth from disadvantaged backgrounds for a greater purpose. I hope this will better equip them to surpass the hindering pitfalls of becoming high school dropouts, being involved in illegal activities, teenage parents or other negative challenges. Sergiovanni (1999) used a spiritual context to describe what he called leadership grounded in “purposing”. He argued that purposing is a powerful force that focuses on human needs for a sense of what is important and what is of value.

I am a certified teacher who has worked in non-profit, community organizations for over 12 years. Empowered to serve African American youth from underserved communities, I chose to work outside of the political constraints within a school district. My work resided within a large community-based non-profit organization whose mission was to provide prevention services to over 6,000 youth annually. These youth, ages 12-18, were from economically and educationally disadvantaged communities and participated in afterschool programs offering academic enrichment, recreation, youth leadership, culture and art, mentoring and career development programs.

I was employed with that organization for over eight years, serving in the role of Director of Education, Training, and Community Partnerships for 6 years. I also convened a four county-wide Afterschool Peer Network that engaged over 100 different afterschool providers, funders, and policy makers monthly to discuss topic focal points such as, connecting to resources, networking with school district administrators, promoting collaboration, advocating for funding, and sharing of best practices related to

afterschool programs and youth development. As a way of strengthening the services provided to the youth, their families, and communities, I developed and fostered many professional working relationships with several community, school, and foundation leaders, as well as with non-profit organizations and corporate companies. The questions for this research derived within this personal and professional context.

Communities as integral stakeholders. I believe that school- family-community partnerships are critical in the successful development of African American youth from underserved communities. When families, schools, and communities work collaboratively, the following outcomes have been documented: (a) higher student achievement, (b) improved student behavior and attendance, and (c) more positive school climates (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Epstein et. al., (2002) provided a framework of six types of involvement to help schools organize such action around important goals for students' learning. The external model of the theory shows three spheres representing the school, family, and community. These spheres can be pulled together or apart by factors such as the age of the child, the educational background of the parent, or the professional experiences of the teacher. When these spheres are pulled together, students benefit from the collaborative support provided by adults in their families, schools, and communities (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Sanders, 1998). However, when these spheres are pulled apart, students are placed at greater risk for negative school outcomes. For successful overlap to occur, schools must create systemic structures and channels of communication that promote and sustain collaborative action. See Figure 1.1 below.

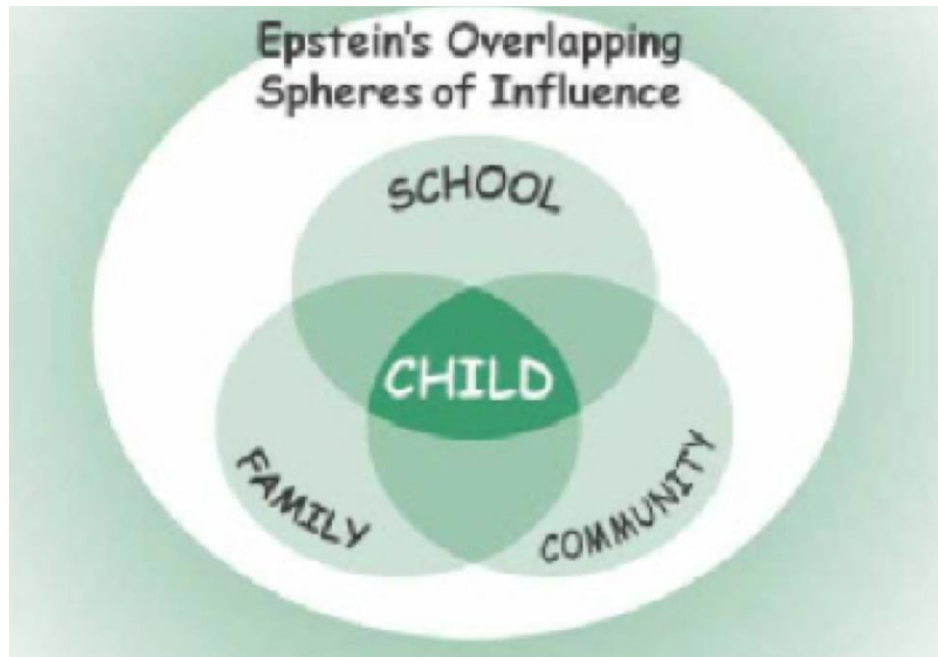


Figure1.1 Spheres of Influence

Source: Joyce L. Epstein, Ph.D., et. al., Partnership Center for the Social Organization of Schools

Sanders (2009) argues that effective partnerships require that schools view parents and communities as partners in the educational process and create environments in which collaboration for students' success is encouraged and supported. My experiences support this claim, but I would also add that these effective and successful partnerships should also consider and focus on the classroom teachers' cultural beliefs and pedagogy of work with diverse student populations. The authors of culturally responsive pedagogy theorize that learning becomes more relevant to students when teachers make effective use of their cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles in the teaching and learning process. They also theorize that engaging in culturally responsive teaching practices can make a difference in students' achievement, particularly for students of color (Gay, 2000).

Professional learning communities. With the growing awareness and critical demand to close the educational gap between African American students and white students, there is an urgent need for teachers to become culturally responsive. The capacity to be adaptive and responsive, however, depends on the capacity for learning (Fullan, 2001; Heifetz, 1994; Senge, 1990). Without individual and team learning among teachers and administrators in collaboration with the school community and parents, schools will cease to strategically progress in closing the educational achievement gap.

The importance of creating and sustaining learning communities can be traced to Lev Vygotsky's (1978) theory, in which, culture and human interaction play a central role in developmental processes. He emphasizes that learning is highly social and mediated by one's culture. In his book, *Mind in Society*, Vygotsky argues that even the development of the human brain is influenced by activities of cultures within which people participate. According to Vygotsky, learning is a socially and culturally mediated mechanism that requires the engagement as opposed to the passivity of learners.

Over the past 20 years (Louis, 2006), there has been an increase in the seminal work related to developing the learning capacities of adults in schools. In the school-based literature related to organizational learning, terminology has evolved that embraces this concept (Kensler et al., 2009). Terms such as a community of learners (Barth, 2001) learning communities (Senge et al., 2000), professional community (Kruse, Louise & Bryk, 1994) professional learning communities (Hord, 2004) describe educational structures and processes designed for the purpose of facilitating and increasing teachers' learning by bringing individuals together for professional conversations about improving student learning. I will use the term professional learning communities as it directly

relates to the teachers' perceptions of their own learning in being culturally responsive teachers.

By being engaged in the professional learning communities within the school-family-community context, teachers stimulate both their own professional development and the development of the school and thus make a significant contribution to improving teaching practices. Engaging educators in continuous and team learning is an important vehicle for the complex task of identifying and learning their way to solutions important to the future of our schools and children (Fullan, 2006; Senge, 1990, Senge et al., 2000).

My experiences suggest that professional learning communities are the linchpin between educational research and educational practice aimed at improving academic performance and reducing the achievement gap between students of color and white students. For veteran teachers working in schools, professional learning communities have the potential for being a powerful vehicle of change.

Engagement in professional learning communities gives teachers an opportunity to be heard, to work together collaboratively, share observations, talk frankly about their students and encourage creative thought about their students' abilities. To reduce the achievement gap between students of color and white students, professional learning communities in culturally responsive teaching practices holds promise because of its focus on developing culturally responsive teaching practices and culturally responsive caring tailored to the specific instructional needs of individual teachers. How and what we think is governed by culture including the experiences, culture, and reality of teachers must be taken into account in working with African American students (Trawick-Smith, 2000).

This dissertation study addresses a gap in the extant literature of afterschool programs bridging the gap between school, family, and community partnerships, in forming in-service teachers' knowledge learning development. The primary focus of this study is on in-service teachers' culturally responsive teaching instruction supported and developed through less formal learning and teaching environments. Specifically, I looked at teacher's beliefs, personal narratives, and culturally responsive teaching practices in educating African American youth attending a quality afterschool program in an underserved community. Furthermore, this work investigates whether or not quality afterschool programs attended by African American students from underserved communities can serve as a professional learning community to assist in the development of in-service teachers' culturally responsive pedagogy.

Statement of the Problem

In America today, a number of youth face significant challenges that classify them as disadvantaged youth. Failing schools, dangerous neighborhoods, poverty, disproportionate incarceration, poor health and nutrition, and lack of employment opportunities are just a few of the factors facing many of our youth today. A National Research Council report concluded that, "At least 25 percent of adolescents in the United States are at serious risk of not achieving a 'productive adulthood' (Eccles & Gootman, 2002. p. 8).

More needs to be done among America's most underserved communities to ensure that children are receiving a comprehensive and culturally responsive education to help close the achievement gap. There is a lack of coordinated effort between community-based service agencies and schools to support African-American youth from

underserved communities. Schools and other organizations that invest in youth are prime facilitators of community connections.

Many neighborhoods lack safe places for youth to gather and socialize without parents being concerned about violence, drug use, abduction, traffic or other dangers. Community collaboration is needed to provide a comprehensive team approach to improve support of youth from at-risk populations (Correll, 1992, p. 49). This collaboration allows schools to work with community agencies to ensure a comprehensive team approach. Schools and agencies working tighter can eliminate duplicate and disjointed services, provide better assistance, promote effective communication, and save tax dollars.

A disconnected community is in jeopardy of becoming an unsafe community. Criminologist Robert J. Sampson asserts, “Communities characterized by, (a) anonymity and sparse acquaintanceship networks among residents, (b) unsupervised teenage peer groups and attenuated control of public space, and (c) a weak organizational base and low social participation in local activities face an increased risk of crime and violence.” (Kahne, J. et al., 2001).

Quality afterschool programs are uniquely suited to fill this void and become America's new neighborhood -- a safe place for both youth and parents to gather to learn, play and connect. By giving schools, families, and communities a sound investment in one another, quality afterschool programs have the unique ability to reach youth from underserved communities that are disenchanting with school, hard to reach, or may be isolated from their communities.

Disparities in educating African American youth. Fifty-seven years after Brown v. Board of Education (1954), the achievement gap between White and non-Asian “minority” students remain large, and the differences in access to educational opportunities are growing (Darling-Hammond, 2007). This widening gap in educational achievement has long been the focus of debates by educational researchers and policy makers; however, the disparities in achievement continue to persist and prevail (Sadowski, 2001; Horsford, 2009). In a democratic society this unrelenting achievement gap threatens our shared ideals of education and the promise of democracy for all Americans, especially for those students who live in poverty, students of diverse racial, ethnic, language, and social class who are in the greatest need of an excellent, high quality public education to truly prepare all students for the challenging future ahead (Nieto et al., 2002).

In a speech during his historic campaign for president (2007), Senator Barack Obama described the United States’ large-scale race and class-based achievement gaps as “morally unacceptable and economically untenable.” As noted by Darling-Hammond (2007), recurring explanations of educational inequality among pundits, policy makers, and everyday people typically blame children and their families for lack of effort, poor child rearing, a “culture of poverty” or inadequate genes (Herrnstein & Murry, 1994). The presumption that undergirds much of the conversation is that opportunities for equal educational opportunity now exists; therefore, continued low levels of achievement on the part of students of color must be intrinsic to them, their families, or their communities (Darling-Hammond, 2007).

Today, contemporary school environments, particularly urban settings, with high concentrations of poor and African American student populations, are criticized for suffering from a lack of qualified and caring, teachers, unchallenging and limited curricular and extracurricular opportunities, a lack or absences of parental involvement, and school principals who are not connected to their communities (Horsford, 2009).

The role of the well-qualified teacher. Much of the difference in school achievement between minority students and others is due to the effects of unequal school opportunities and, in particular, greatly disparate access to high-quality teachers and teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2007). The disparities in access to well-qualified teachers are large and have been growing worse since the 1980s. During this timeframe, teacher demands began to increase while resources were declining. As a result, today we find that many of the less-qualified teachers are found in schools serving greater number of low-income and minority youth (Lankford et al., 2002).

Frequently, in schools serving large numbers of minorities, school districts are faced with shortages of qualified teachers and are often assigned teachers outside their certificated content areas; they have increased class sizes, or are forced to cancel course selections (NCES, 1997; NCTAF, 1997). Such disadvantages contribute to school failure for low-income and minority children. This failure helps to perpetuate inequality for them by its failure to deal effectively with the issues of teacher supply and quality (Darling-Hammond, 2007). Tatum (2007) has found that of the 3 million teachers in the United States only 15.6 % are teachers of color. Also, of that number, African American teachers only represent 7.5% of the teaching workforce. According to Tatum (2007), “Most students of color today are being taught by a teaching force that is predominately White

and female...” (p.25) Tatum goes on to indicate that “nowhere is the current cultural mismatch between students and teachers more visible than in urban school districts where White teachers make up 65 to 76 percent... of the teaching population and students of color represent 76 percent of the urban student population.” (pp. 25-26). It is inevitable that misunderstandings are to take place with such a great racial and cultural discrepancies between the student population and their teachers (Haberman, 2005; Tatum, 2007). Students’ access to well-qualified teachers can be a critical determinant of whether they succeed on the state tests often required for grade articulation, obtain placement into more academically challenging classes, or even graduate from high school.

Preparing well-qualified culturally responsive teachers who have willingness and abilities to teach in diverse school contexts is one of the most daunting task facing teacher educators today (Gay, 2002; Villegas, 2008). As referenced to in Darling-Hammond (2009), Gallego (2001) noted:

“Though teacher education students may be placed in schools with, large, culturally diverse student populations, many of these schools. . . do not provide the kind of contact with communities needed to overcome negative attitudes toward culturally different students and their families, and communities. Indeed, without connections between the classroom, school, and local communities, classroom field experiences may work to strengthen pre-service teachers’ stereotypes of children, rather than stimulate their examination, and ultimately compromise teachers’ effectiveness in the classroom” (p. 314).

In *Crossing over to Canaan: The Journey of New Teachers in Diverse Classrooms* (2001), Ladson-Billings stated that, "Few teacher education programs prepare teachers to be effective in urban classrooms serving diverse groups of students." (pg. 3). According to Ladson-Billings (2001),

"Culturally relevant teachers know that it is their job to learn about the students' cultures and their communities. They need to bridge the divide between the school and the students' homes. They do not assume that students have to learn their ways and rules. They understand the interest they show in students' backgrounds and lives has an important payoff in the classroom" (p. 99).

I believe that quality afterschool programs in underserved communities can help to address the lack of preparation given to teachers to be effective in urban classrooms serving African American youth. Specifically, classroom teachers working in these programs can interact with and learn about the students' cultures and communities.

Significance of the Study

It takes a village. Educating a child takes cooperation and involvement from educators, families, and the community. A well-known African Proverb says, "It takes a village to raise a child." Barry McCrary (2003) paints a very vivid picture of why, "It takes a village to raise a child." In his dissertation, he investigates how an intensive afterschool program for male juvenile offenders plays an important role in the successful turn around of the youth. He explains that a village or community is a place where chaos comes to order, where crises are resolved and where everyone begins to work together. In this community, all young people have a mentor, a role model and someone looking out for their best interests. The described community is a place where families have support;

and students have tutors and access to computers. This community is where education is being promoted, love and respect is valued and kids can be kids. Everyone is safe and secure, no one goes without a meal and expectations for young men are high. This community sets high standards, goals, and values, and has power to enforce these standards if there are attempts to lower them (Barry McCray's unpublished dissertation, 2003).

Being outside this community is another story. Outside this community can be unhealthy and dangerous. Outside of this community, chaos can be the norm, low expectations are acceptable, crises are not resolved and everyone is not really working together. Outside this community, growth is not nurtured, families are not supported and everyone is not looking out for the interests of the children. Outside of the community some children lack father figures, role models and guidance from positive people. Tutors are hard to find, computers are non-existent and education is not being promoted. Outside of the community can be rough. (Barry McCray's unpublished dissertation, 2003).

Research has shown the greater the family and community involvement in schools, the greater the students' achievement (Niemiec, R., Sikorski, M., & Walberg, 1999). Grenae Dudley, Executive Director of the Youth Connection in Detroit states, "In communities where at least 50 percent of the kids are participating in afterschool programs, that community is five times more likely to be a healthy community because they are putting resources behind their children." (Douglas-Hall, A. et al., 2006).

Educating in diverse environments. Increasingly, student populations in U.S. public school classrooms are from backgrounds identified as culturally, linguistically, ethnically, religiously, economically, and otherwise socially diverse (Horsford, 2011;

Juarez & Hayes, 2010). The rich diversity of U.S. schools presents challenges to which educators need to respond and opportunities that should be explored. As noted in, “Learning: in and out of school in diverse environments” (2008), the academic achievement gap between ethnic minority and majority groups is one of the most complex and intractable problems faced by schools both in the U.S. and around the world (Banks & Banks, 2004; Luchtenberg, 2004). In as much, diversity also provides rich opportunities to create learning environments in which instruction is enriched, the academic achievement of marginalized students is enhanced, and the education is improved (Banks, et.al, 2008).

As Bowen and Bok (1998) insightfully point out, a good education requires education about diversity in a diverse environment. Though education may be thought of primarily in terms of formal instruction during the traditional school day, probably most of the significant education experienced by individuals takes place before he or she comes to school or during out-of school hours (Grambs, 1978). Most of the learning that occurs in a lifetime take place in less formal environments. Quality afterschool programs can provide that informal setting that fosters student and teacher growth.

Research Questions

The possibilities of enacting culturally responsive pedagogy, the mediocrity of K-12 schools in educating students of color, and the opportunities that exist in afterschool programs provoked me to focus my research study on in-service teachers working in afterschool programs. I look expressly at whether or not culturally responsive teaching instruction can be or is supported and developed through less formal learning and teaching environments. I focus on teacher’s beliefs, personal narratives, and culturally

responsive teaching practices in educating African American youth attending a quality afterschool program in an underserved community. Furthermore, this work investigates whether or not quality afterschool programs attended by African American students from underserved communities can serve as a professional learning community to assist in the development of in-service teachers' culturally responsive pedagogy. The three research questions that guide this work are:

1). From a teacher's perspective, what role, if any, do quality afterschool programs play in preparing them to effectively educate African American youth from underserved communities?

2). What transformative processes are experienced by teachers who decide to work in an afterschool program located in an underserved community?

3). What do teachers believe is the role of teacher learning in ensuring teacher effectiveness for educating African-American youth from underserved backgrounds?

Theoretical Framework

Is in-service teachers' culturally responsive teaching instruction supported and developed through less formal learning and teaching environments? Are teacher's beliefs, personal narratives, and culturally responsive teaching practices in educating African American youth attending a quality afterschool program in an underserved community directly related to the teachers' effectiveness in enacting culturally responsive pedagogy? Can a quality afterschool program attended by African American students from underserved communities serve as a professional learning community to assist in developing in-service teachers' culturally responsive pedagogy? All these questions shaped the theoretical framing of this work. In order to focus on the classroom teachers'

beliefs and personal narratives as they make meaning of their lived experiences and working in a less formal educational setting with African American youth from underserved communities, I use culturally responsive pedagogy (Erickson, 1987, Gay, 2000, 2002) and Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) as my theoretical frameworks. I believe these theories intersect when looking at the problem from a school-family-community perspective.

Culturally responsive pedagogy: Learning about students in their communities. In schools today, teachers must be prepared to teach a diverse population of students. As noted by Monica R. Brown (2007), researchers (Gay, 2000, 2002) have asserted that the academic achievement of students from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds would improve if educators were to make the effort to ensure that classroom instruction was conducted in a manner that was responsive to the students' home cultures. According to Gay, 2000; Martin and Van Gunten, 2002, engaging in culturally responsive pedagogy requires that teachers understand the views and learning preferences children bring to school and how students communicate in their communities.

LePage et. al, 2005, argues that by knowing children well and being attuned to diversity, teachers can develop instruction that is engaging and that is developmentally appropriate for children with different temperaments, backgrounds and cultures. Specifically, they suggest that educators should try to develop a more aligned fit between students' home cultures and the culture of the school. By making school knowledge relevant to students, teachers both engage the children's attention and promote their desire to learn (Banks, 1993; Mehan et al., 1995). To help students from diverse backgrounds build bridges between home and school, teachers, need to know about the

lives of the specific children they teach (Villegas & Lucas, 2002, p. 80). Thus, teachers need to know about students' lives outside school.

In her chapter on school desegregation entitled, "Families as Educators: The Forgotten People of Brown," Sarah Lawrence Lightfoot (1980) explained that the future of equal and equitable education requires a serious look at locating children at the center of our efforts to forge and foster meaningful school–home connections, which is increasingly significant for schools serving African American student populations. She noted that this future requires an assessment of the power relationships that exist between historically disenfranchised communities and the schools that serve them. I believe that teachers can develop their culturally responsive pedagogy by connecting, analyzing and working through the lens the ecological systems theory as it places the youth at the core.

Ecological systems theory. Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979), who is generally regarded as a leading scholar in the field of developmental psychology, proposed that human development must be understood in the complexity of relationships and structures in which people participate and which influence them. As such, he developed the Ecological Systems Theory that has four main systems, which consist of:

- (1) microsystems,
- (2) mesosystem,
- (3) exosystem,
- (4) macrosystem, and the
- (5) chronosystem, that was later added.

The microsystem includes immediate environments such as: (a) family; (b) peer group; (c) school; (d) childcare; (e) afterschool programs, and (f) sports teams. The

mesosystem makes connections between the immediate environments of the Microsystem; for instance, a child's home and school. The exosystem are contexts that do not directly include the person, but that affect the person. In other words, this includes external environmental settings that indirectly affect development, such as a parent's work place. The macrosystem, structures that exist on a larger scale, looks at larger cultures, which may have an affect on development; these include the economic or political culture, religious or ethnic groups. Later a fifth system was added to the original four: The chronosystem. This system considers the pattern of environmental events or transitions that a person can go through in life.

Bronfenbrenner's theory is ideal for understanding afterschool programs because of his interest in how the context and the relationships between contexts affect the individual. As noted by Karen Dreyer in her unpublished dissertation (2010), Bronfenbrenner's theory has been used by a number of researchers to understand the changes that happen in students who attend programs. Posner and Vandell used Bronfenbrenner's theory to recognize that afterschool environments are not static for students and that there are connections between children's activities during afterschool hours and their behavior at school and at home (1999). Mahoney, Lord, et al. (2005) also used Bronfenbrenner's model to identify connections between individual characteristics of students, specifically engagement in afterschool activities, and behavioral and academic outcomes.

As noted in Villegas & Lucas (2002), teachers who know about their students' family lives are better prepared to understand the children's in-school behavior and to incorporate the "funds of knowledge" those families possess in classroom activities.

Similarly, teachers who know about their students' social lives, outside of school can systematically tie the students' interests and concerns into their teaching (Darling-Hammond, 1996; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Figure 1.2 depicts a vivid model of Bronfenbrenners's Ecological Model as it situates the child in the center of complexity of relationships and structures.

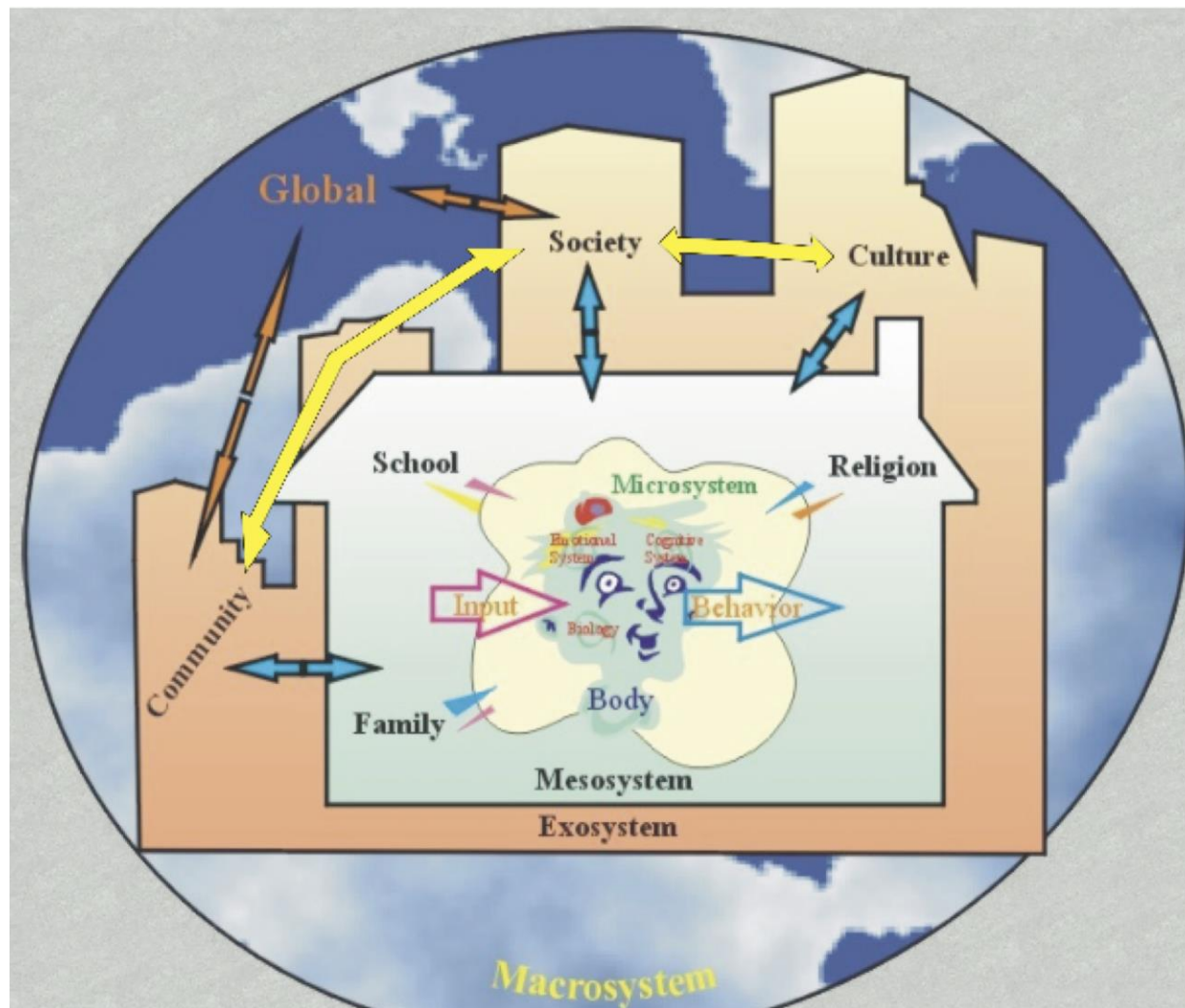


Figure 1.2 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model
Source: Dede Paquette and John Ryan

Pilot Study

Investigating teacher's beliefs, personal narratives, and culturally responsive teaching practices in educating African American youth attending a quality afterschool program in an underserved community was inspired by findings from a pilot study that I conducted in Fall 2010. In this section, I will briefly describe the connection between the findings from my pilot study to the development of my proposed dissertation research study.¹

Purpose. The purpose of the pilot study was to investigate the quality level and frequency of professional development opportunities that afterschool school program staff received. The bottom line of many afterschool studies is that one of the most critical features of high-quality programs necessary for achieving positive outcomes is the quality of a program's staff. Specifically, leaders are responsible for future leadership and they should identify, develop, and nurture future leaders to ensure program sustainability. The guiding research questions for the pilot study were:

1). Does increased professional development opportunities for afterschool school program staff help create an environment that inspires and motivates youth?

2). Do classroom teachers and/teacher aids who also work as afterschool program staff, see a positive impact in their teaching style as a result of their involvement in the afterschool program?

3). What leadership behaviors are evidenced in afterschool program staff who work in programs that predominately populated with African-American youth from underserved communities?

¹ Refer to the Appendix for more details on the pilot study.

The following section briefly explores the research design, methods, and findings that led to the current research inquiry.

Research design and data collection. Qualitative interviews and observations analyses were used to examine the above research questions. Qualitative methods allowed for multiple data sources, which provided varied perspectives and also allowed for a complete, detailed description of the participants' experiences. Data collection also involved oral narrative inquiry interviews (Clandinin & Connelly, 1999)-a method that, beyond the hermeneutical goals of interpretation, goes one step further in arguing that people understand their lives and explain their lives through stories and metaphors. Secondary data consisted of activity lesson plans, afterschool daily schedule, monthly calendar of programs, and a listing of their scheduled professional development trainings.

Sample population and data analysis. The study's participants included three classroom teachers that also work in the afterschool program, the program director of the afterschool program, a teaching assistant that also works during the school day, and two staff members that only work during the afterschool program. The participants' teaching experience ranged from one to twelve years. To gain multiple perspectives, the pilot study included one African-American male, three white males and three African-American women. All of the participants worked for an afterschool program that serves elementary and middle school student in an underserved community. According to the organization's mission statement, the program is committed to nurturing the development of children by meeting their academic, social and emotional needs within a constructive, wholesome and safe learning environment. This environment places value on making positive choices as a foundation for building a productive life. Each subject participated

in a recorded open ended, narrative interview that lasted about 30 to 45 minutes. To identify convergence in the data (Patton 1990), all the interview transcripts, observation field notes, and documents were coded.

Findings. The findings were categorized into three main categories: (a) motivating environment; (b) the changing view of teaching; (c) professional development. Below, describe key take away points in each finding.

Motivating environment. The participants in this study described their line of work to be directly influenced and impacted by their passion to teach and work with children. Parson (2004) writes that educators feel they are appreciated partners with the community in the important tasks of providing for the educational and developmental needs of those who live in the community, (p. 5). Our communities must be engaged in the afterschool programs and out of school time services to mobilize the resources that are needed to recognize that education is critical to social progress. As one participant noted:

“It is a duty and honor to work afterschool to provide academic assistance to struggling students and support to all for enhancement to all students.”

(Teaching assistant, November 18th, 2010, 3:57pm).

This statement supports the foundational notations of American education as articulated by the well-known educational philosopher, John Dewey. In 1897, he wrote:

I believe that it is the business of every one interested in education is to insist upon the school as the primary and most effective interest of social progress and reform in order that society may be awakened to realize what the school stands for, and aroused to the necessity of endowing the educator with the sufficient equipment perform his tasks (p. 79).

This pilot study suggests that this afterschool program provides such a journey from the school building to the afterschool program in educating its youth.

The changing view of teaching. The second major emergent theme that came to light was the changing views of teachers. As one of the classroom teacher participants stated:

“I stay [in the afterschool program] because I feel that my kids need me and they always perform better when I am here. For example, we had a staff meeting and I got to the program a little late and when I got there, the kids were in tears and it was because they were struggling with making change [money], so I sat down and retaught the whole lesson on money currency. In fact, the next day in school, I re-taught the math lesson again to make sure that all the students understood it.”

(Classroom Teacher, November 18th, 2010, 5:15pm)

Another teacher said:

“I was able to see the students’ homework performance, which allows me to see that I may need to teach the lesson in another style or manner. The students and I also get to see each other in a different light; umm there is a personality difference between the morning and afterschool.”

(Classroom Teacher, November 19th, 2010, 2:47pm)

Professional development. Because of the contrary result with respect to the effectiveness of professional development programs, scholars have started to develop newer conceptualizations of teachers’ professional development that move beyond “one-slot” approaches such as workshops, training, and conferences (Desimone, 2009). The National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning says that effective professional development should consist of six main elements: (a) is built into the day-to-day work of teaching and school life; (b) is continuous and ongoing, including follow-up; (c) provides formal and informal opportunities to gain an understanding of any new knowledge; (d) enables study and research pursued on one’s own, (e) fosters a deepening of content area

knowledge; (f) centers around the critical areas of teaching, such as lesson planning. The National Partnership for Quality Afterschool Learning also suggest there needs to be a paradigm shift in the way out-of-school time (OST) professionals think about professional development. Their views are depicted Table 1.1

Table 1.1 Paradigm Shift

From:	To:
Training separate from the job	Job-embedded training
Staff developers as trainers	Staff developers as facilitators
Individual development	Organizational development
Fragmented professional development	Systematic professional development
Experts tell teachers what to do	Teachers as experts
Professional development as a “frill”	Professional development as a significant component of student success

Of the views depicted in their detailed chart, afterschool staff participants in this study spoke about job embedded training, staff developers as facilitators, fragmented professional development, and professional development as a significant component of student success. One study participant spoke to the professional development and involvement in the afterschool program as a significant component of student success.

They noted:

“The [students] performance is clearly better. I had a wonderful class last year and I mean, they were great, um, probably 90% of them stayed afterschool. We were even looking at the students who were receiving certificates or awards being honored for citizenship and perfect attendance, and it was like all those kids who were receiving awards that stayed afterschool.”

(Classroom Teacher, November 19th, 2010, 4:15pm)

The need for professional development training in behavior management in strategies to deal with students that misbehave and do not follow the rules was represented in over half of the interview participants. For example, the afterschool program director noted that they are implementing a bully-free zone character development curriculum that is being used during the school day.

Transformative learning theory. Transformative learning theory describes how learners construe, validate, and reformulate the meaning of their experiences (Kappel and Daley, 2004). I see evidence of this in the teachers and teaching staff as they described using the afterschool program as a bridge to provide insight in curriculum delivery strategies and ways to connect with the students in a different light and environment.

Jack Mezirow (1978) first introduced the transformative learning theory of adult learning to help explain how adults changed the way they interpreted their world in frames of reference. Frames of reference are the structures of assumptions through which we understand our experiences. When circumstances permit, transformative learners move toward a frame of reference that is more inclusive, discriminating, self-reflective, and integrative of experience. This process is what Mezirow calls “perspective transformation”. We transform our frames of reference through critical reflection on the assumptions upon which our interpretations, beliefs, and habits of mind or points of view are defined. Mezirow (1997) defines habits of mind as broad, abstract, orienting, habitual ways of thinking, feeling, and acting influenced by assumptions that constitute a set of cultural, social, educational, economic, political, or psychological codes. Mezirow (1997) asserts that habits of mind become articulated in a specific point of view – the

constellation of belief, value, judgment, attitude, and feeling that shapes a particular interpretation.

Edward Taylor (2000) reviewed twenty-three studies that used Mezirow's model and focused on transformational learning in the classroom. He found support for some of Mezirow's ideal conditions for transformational learning, including the need for "a safe, open, and trusting environment" that allows for participation, collaboration, exploration, critical reflection, and feedback (p. 154). Taylor cites Saavendra's (1995) study, which focused on the learning process of a teacher's group devoted to improving their instructional techniques. Taylor states that "placing teachers at the center of their own learning in a critically reflective and social group setting contributed to transformation" (p. 155).

Taylor (2008) says that transformative learning is about educating from a particular worldview and a particular educational philosophy that should not be taken lightly or without considerable personal reflection (p. 13). Self-reflections can lead to significant personal transformations. This means taking the position that without developing a deeper awareness of our own frames of reference and how they shape practice, there is little likelihood that we can foster change in others.

In summary, transformative learning results from perspective transformation, from which, through critical reflection on assumptions and beliefs, new frames of reference or meaning structures emerge. Through discourse, validation of these new meanings completes the process and creates new lenses from which individuals can view and make sense of their worlds (Mezirow, 1997). This was evident in the quotes

provided that supported the pilot study's three themes of: (a) motivating environment; (b) the changing view of teaching; (c) professional development.

Pilot study and dissertation inquiry. The pilot research study is useful to the extent that it has the potential to assist educational leaders, social service agencies, afterschool programs, community residents, and others who have an interest in learning and supporting quality leadership through professional development in afterschool programs or out of school programs. This study has important implications for those who are practicing servant leadership and who have a vested interest in the afterschool or out-of-school-time profession, especially in service to youth from underserved communities—one of the populations at greatest risk for academic failure and school dropout. Servant leadership as an idea or theme has a lineage as old as the scriptures. The servanthood of leadership needs to be felt, understood, believed, and practiced if we are to be faithful. DuPree (1995) says the best description of this kind of leadership is found in the book of Luke: “The greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules, like the one who serves.” The finest instruction in how to practice is in *Servant Leadership* by Robert Greenleaf, which DePree notes is a lovely grace note to the melody of Luke.

For Greenleaf, the great leader is a servant first. Greenleaf developed the concept of servant leadership after reading Herman Hesse's *Journey to the East*, which tells the story of a group of pilgrims who are on mythical journey to discover the ultimate eastern order and how a loyal servant named Leo sustains them through their many trials and struggles. What Greenleaf proposed was a revolutionary paradigm shift in the role of leaders at the time. Greenleaf (1995) stated that “a new moral principal is emerging which holds that the only authority deserving one's allegiance is that which is freely and

knowingly granted by the led to the leaders in response to, and in proportion to, the clearly evident servant stature of the leader” (p. 18). Teachers are instructional leaders in the classroom that can practice transformative learning to become servant leaders to their students.

Future possibilities. Additional research is needed to determine which lived experiences and leadership attributes of OST professionals are most effective for specific youth populations that attend OST programs. In essence, are there certain or different experiences and leadership styles that OST professionals should have to effectively reach youth from underserved populations versus youth from a middle class upbringing, or for youth who have a specific interest in sports, creative arts, music, or computers? Research on these topics will better enable schools, families, and communities to draw on and combine the resources and skills they possess to promote greater achievement among all youth through quality professional development. To assist teachers in becoming keener to the needs of African American students, school leaders can engage teachers in professional learning communities that focus on developing culturally responsive teaching practices through engagement with the community and parents.

Reflection on the particular findings from this pilot study, require further consideration of the comments from the research participants who were also classroom teachers. During their interviews, the in-service teachers made comments as to how their involvement in the afterschool makes them reflect on their teaching practices, and how they build relationships with the students during the afterschool, which lead to enhanced classroom management strategies. The in-service teachers mentioned “seeing the students in a new light” and made hints to, “now understanding the student’s better.”

Literature reviews of culturally responsive teaching, the benefits of afterschool programs, school-family-community partnerships, and bridging the gap between school and afterschool education, along with the aforementioned themes were described by the in-service teacher participants. Further investigation is needed into teacher's beliefs, personal narratives, and culturally responsive teaching practices in educating African American youth attending a quality afterschool program in an underserved community.

Chapter Conclusion

I end this chapter with a list of definition terms that I refer to throughout the remaining work in this dissertation. In chapter two, the literature and research will be reviewed on the history of afterschool programs and culturally responsive pedagogy related to the education of African American students and developing school, family, and community partnerships to build background and knowledge for the study. Chapter three, the methodology chapter, will detail how the research will be conducted. The case study design, site utilized for the study, participants, data collected and the data analysis will be explained. Chapter four, the findings of the research conducted will be shared. Finally, chapter five will review the research and discuss the findings of the research and additional research opportunities for bridging the gap between school, family, and community partnership, with developing culturally responsive teachers, and increasing the achievement in African American youth from underserved communities.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are included to provide clarity to the study.

- 1) Afterschool Programs: Quality afterschool programs are community-driven, expanded learning opportunities that support developmentally appropriate cognitive, social, physical, and emotional outcomes. In addition, these programs offer a balanced program of academic support, arts and cultural enrichment, recreation, and nutrition. Afterschool programs can run directly after school, or during evenings, weekends, summer vacations, and holidays. (Educational Broadcasting Corporation)
- 2) Chronosystem of influence: level in Bronfenbrenner's ecological model that represents the process in which the entire system moves through time and includes the impact of historical events on the individual (Thomas, 1996).
- 3) Cultural Competence: The ability to function effectively in the awareness of other's culture of origin (Ladson-Billings, 1995).
- 4) Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: "an approach to teaching and learning that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural references to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997 p. 62).
- 5) Culturally Relevant Teachers: Teachers who position themselves to implement culturally relevant pedagogy and strategically seek ways to transform curriculum, instructional practices, staff development and even community alliances such that they are equitable and offer students quality educational experiences (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1994,1995).
- 6) Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more

- effectively. Furthermore, it is based on the assumption that when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the lived experiences and frames of reference of students, they are more personally meaningful, have higher interest appeal, and are learned more easily and thoroughly (Gay, 2002).
- 7) Diverse student populations: Students who are distinguished from mainstream society by their ethnicity, social class, and primary language.
 - 8) Exosystem of influence: level in Bronfenbrenner's ecological model that refers to the settings that do not involve the individual as an active participant.
 - 9) Macrosystems of influence: level in Bronfenbrenner's ecological model that refers to the overarching attitudes, ideals, and beliefs of society that impact teaching and learning.
 - 10) Mesosystem of influence: level in Bronfenbrenner's ecological model that is noted as a process rather than an actual system of influence and refers to the interplay between two or more Microsystems (Thomas, 1996)
 - 11) Microsystem of influence: level in Bronfenbrenner's ecological model that refers to the settings that are directly influenced by or influences the individual (i.e. classroom, prior knowledge, etc.) (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)
 - 12) Out-of-School Time (OST): A wide range of program offerings for young people that take place before school, after school, on weekends, and during the summer and other school breaks that are designed to provide safe places for young people, opportunities for experiencing consistent relationships with peers and adults, and unstructured play and physical recreation.(The National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST), 2000, p. 1). The term OST represents a shift

from “afterschool,” which is often focused more narrowly on providing academic assistance and a safe place for children ages 5-14 in the non-school hours, typically from 3 to 6 p.m., in school or community-based settings. Out-of-school-time programming is a more inclusive term that includes efforts to comprehensively and holistically serve young people while contributing to positive youth outcomes.

- 13) School-Family-Community Partnerships: A strategy that promotes collaboration among students, families, communities, and school leaders to achieve school excellence and student success (Sanders, 2009).

CHAPTER TWO: Review of the Literature

Defining Afterschool Programs

It is important to define what afterschool programs are at the outset, as the recent growth in the field has been guided by three commingling philosophies, rather than one unifying vision of how children's time should be spent. These philosophies are referred to as "youth development," "school-age child care," and "extended day programs" or "expanded learning programs (Education Broadcasting Corporation, 2004)."

Afterschool programs are hard to define, in part, because there are no required standards for what constitutes an afterschool program. Programs receiving 21st Century Community Learning Center funding, for example, are not required to be certified as child care facilities, nor are various other part-day programs for school-aged children. Afterschool programs can apply for accreditation to the Council on Accreditation, which uses the National AfterSchool Alliance standards as a basis for their system. However, such accreditation is voluntary. Though not required to be certified, afterschool programs receiving grants through the 21st Century Community Learning Center Initiative must adhere to certain requirements and make federal assurances with regard to academic enrichment and parental involvement activities. Many afterschool programs are certified by the Department of Public Welfare as child-care facilities because the afterschool programs are incorporated into the child care program they provide to preschool children. Certified child-care programs, particularly those that provide center-based care, are subject to extensive health, safety, staffing, and other regulatory requirements.

Pennsylvania State Representative Jake Wheatley introduced and championed House Resolution 2008-824, which called on the Pennsylvania Legislative Budget and Finance Committee (LB&FC) to assess the availability and affordability of afterschool programs in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Among the six objectives of the study, one was to determine the availability, types and locations of afterschool programs across the state. The researchers noted that they could not find an agreed-upon definition for an afterschool program and for the purposes of their report defined an afterschool program as a program: (a) having structured activities, (b) engaging adult mentors, (c) offering services at least 12 hours a week outside traditional school time during all or most of the school year, or in the summer, at least five hours a day for six or more weeks, (d) expecting regular attendance, and (c) providing a school or center-based facility. They noted that their definition excluded activities such as seasonal sports leagues, teen drop-in centers, and clubs or programs (e.g., cub scouts or a school chess club) that may only meet once or twice a week.

Halpern (2000) suggests that the primary purpose of afterschool programs should be to provide opportunities for youth to develop their autonomy and to learn experientially. Parents with school-age children support this idea, expressing that they want afterschool activities for their children that foster interests, values, and growth (Duffett, Johnson, Farkas, Kung & Ott, 2004). Others propose that afterschool programs are best suited to develop children's social and emotional skills (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007) and to reduce juvenile crime (Goldschmidt & Huang, 2007). Many others propose that afterschool programs should focus on academic outcomes, to assist students who lag behind their peers (Hock, Pulvers, Deshler, & Schumaker, 2001; Mahoney, Lord, &

Carryl, 2005; Posner & Vandell, 1994). Some have hoped that afterschool programs could be the panacea for poor educational systems and could assist in reducing the achievement gap (Lauer, et al., 2006).

Historical Context of Afterschool Programs

Robert Halpern (2002) has written extensively about the history of afterschool programs and the emerging field of out-of-school time. The RAND Corporation (2005) prepared a report for the Wallace Foundation entitled, *Making Out-of-School-Time Matter: Evidence for an Action Agenda*, that also provides historical phases of development for out-of-school time. Afterschool programs have existed for over a century dating back to the late 1870s (Halpern, 2002). The out-of-school time field began with efforts to help immigrant families by providing activities to boys and then eventually girls, in urban spaces including churches and vacant buildings. In these spaces, the children of immigrants were taught English skills given limited medical care, food and clothing. In the early to mid 1900's more communities began mandating that children attend school from elementary through high school. Public schools provided additional recreational and play activities that were not part of the structured school day (Simkhovich, 1904).

The Great Depression began in 1929 and lasted until about 1939. During this time, budget cuts forced schools to offer fewer or no extracurricular activities and services. Churches and other community entities began to band together to provide a supportive network offering food, clothing and shelter to those in need. These conditions lead C.S. Mott and Frank Manley to develop, in 1935, the model of the "lighted schoolhouse," or a school that is a vibrant community center, open all evening, year-

round, they gave birth to the idea of the community school. Community schools have flourished in some areas of the country and afterschool programs are now serving as stepping-stones for community schools in others. Dryfoos (1999) noted that the need for afterschool programs increased between 1939 and 1945 because women began working while men were serving in World War II. Schools stayed open late to provide extended-care programs. In the decade following World War II, funding for programs grew gradually through social welfare federations, government funding, and the commencement of the United Way (Halpern, 2000).

Within the last several decades, there has been considerable growth of afterschool programs in both quantity and quality due to significant social and economic changes. For example, the increase of women with school-aged children pursuing further education and entering the workforce, the need for childcare and afterschool programs sharply increased (Hollister, 2003; Vandell & Shumow, 1999). As noted in, *Making Out-of-School-Time Matter: Evidence for an Action Agenda* and according to the *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003), in 1970, approximately 21 percent of women with children under the age of 18 worked. By 2002, approximately 73 percent worked. By 2002, 65 percent of women with children under the age of 6 worked, and 79 percent of women with children between the ages of 6 and 17 worked. This represents 67.4 million children under 18 years of age with working mothers (Costello, Wight, and Stone, 2003). Between 1991 and 1997, the number of children enrolled in before and afterschool programs increased from 1.7 million to 6.7 million (Cappizano, Tout, & Adams, 2000; Seppanen et al., 1993). According to data collected in the 2005 *Afterschool Programs and Activities Survey of the National Household Education Survey*

(APAS-NHES: 2005), 20% of children ages 5 through 12 are involved in afterschool programs (Lawrence, Kreader, & National Center for Children in Poverty, 2006).

A second reason for growth in afterschool programs was the decline in safety in neighborhoods, especially in urban, low-income areas (Halpern, 2000). The lack of adult supervision and youth development activities often resulted in increased risky behaviors and youth crime (Carnegie Council, 1992). For example, at the height of gang violence in 1993 in Pgh, PA, many afterschool programs were established in underserved communities as way to provide a safe recreational place for youth to attend.

Finally, afterschool programs have increased in numbers because funding from foundations, the private sector, and from state and federal agencies has grown considerably (Riggs & Greenberg, 2004). The federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLCs) is the only federal funding stream solely devoted to afterschool programs. The 21st CCLCs grant awards are typically for a three-year period. In 1994, under the presidency of Bill Clinton, congress authorized the 21st CCLCs to open up schools for broader use by their communities (DOEd, 2003). In 1998, the 21st CCLC program was refocused to provide school-based academic and recreational activities during non-school hours and quickly grew in the U.S. budget from \$40 million in FY 1998 to \$1 billion in FY 2002 (Hollister, 2003). From 1998 to 2001, the United States Department of Education administered the 21st CCLC program and supplied funds to local communities through a competitive proposal process. In 2002, administration of the 21st CCLC program was turned over to the states. In 2008, this amount had grown to \$1.08 billion dollars (DOED, 2012); this is the latest updated amount available. Even the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which was passed in February 2009,

allocated over \$1 billion dollars towards afterschool programs (Afterschool Alliance, 2009). The cycle round of funding in 2012 allocated towards 21st CCLC Cohort 6A in the state of Pennsylvania, is \$64.4 million which was distributed to 19 community-based organizations; 17 school districts; 10 charter schools; five intermediate units; three institutes of higher education; and three faith-based organizations.

Since its inception, the recognition of the need to have afterschool programs be just a safe haven offering recreational activities for youth, has shifted to mandating and supporting afterschool programs to provide academic enrichment and tutoring services. According to the US Department of Education (2012), the 21st CCLC is a program that supports the creation of community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. The program helps students meet state and local student standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and math; offers students a broad array of enrichment activities that can complement their regular academic programs; and offers literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children.

What makes a Quality Afterschool Program?

While research on OST programs is still a young field of study, there is growing evidence that participation in afterschool programs can result in positive outcomes in youth (Schwartz & Noam, 2007). More studies are beginning to distinguish between the quality of different OST programs and finding that positive outcomes are associated with regular attendance, not of just any OST program, but of high-quality OST programs (McLaughlin, 2000; Vandell & Reisner, 2007).

A report conducted by the RAND Corporation (Bodilly & Beckett, 2005) described the following as characteristics of high quality programs: (a) a clear mission; (b) high expectations and positive social norms; (c) a safe and healthy environment; (d) a supportive emotional climate; (e) a small total enrollment; (f) stable, trained personnel; (g) appropriate content and pedagogy with opportunities to engage; (h) integrated family and community partners; frequent assessment. A report commissioned by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation (Miller, 2003) also created a list summarizing features of high quality programs based on literature from the field. In addition to all of the characteristics mentioned in the RAND report, Miller included: (a) adequate funding; (b) appropriate space; (c) the inclusion of youth voice; (d) opportunity for choice in activities; (e) staff who understand participants' cultures and can support healthy identity development; (f) and strong management and leadership.

In defining effective programs, McLaughlin (2000), considered positive academic outcomes as well as positive youth development outcomes (such as increased self-confidence or sense of civic responsibility). Although the programs achieving positive youth outcomes varied in many ways (such as type of program, location, and activities), McLaughlin found a few critical elements that unified the most successful programs. First and foremost, she described all of these effective programs as “intentional learning environments,” that is, programs that were not content merely with keeping kids off the street, but that were deliberate in their efforts to create opportunities for learning and growth. She also observed that the most effective programs were youth-centered (built around youths' strengths and involving youth voice), knowledge-centered (high-quality instruction, challenging content, and activities with a clear focus on learning), and safe,

caring communities with strong relationships providing youth with social capital through relational resources and connections. In addition, she found that effective programs were assessment-centered, not by using traditional tests, but by providing constant oral feedback and recognition as well as authentic culminating events and public displays.

A report entitled, *Study of Promising Afterschool Programs*, conducted by Vandell et al. (2006) identified promising programs by observing the following “key process features”; (a) staff and youth have supportive relationships with each other and amongst themselves; (b) youth have wide-ranging opportunities to for academic support, recreation, art, and other enrichment activities; (c) appropriate cognitive structured activities; and (d) control over chaos. They found that programs that met their criteria for “promising programs” were associated with positive outcomes in youth who regularly attended them.

In a more focused study of afterschool programs in Massachusetts, the United Way of Massachusetts solicited a report studying “what counts” in afterschool programs (Miller, 2005). They found that youth engagement in programs, staff engagement with youth, and communication with families were correlated with positive youth outcomes (as measured by a tool that assesses academic outcomes as well as youth development outcomes). They also found that the education background of staff and director, staff turnover, and communication with school personnel were linked to positive youth outcomes. Notably, they found that where a program was located (i.e. community-based versus in schools) did not influence program quality.

In describing features of positive developmental settings for youth, Eccles & Gootman (2003) include: (a) physical and psychological safety; (b) appropriate structure;

(c) supportive relationships; (d) a sense of belonging, mattering, and efficacy; (e) positive social norms; (f) opportunities for skill-building; and (g) integration of family, school, and community. These conclusions are based on theories of positive youth development and empirical research on youth experience in a variety of settings. Although there are a growing number of studies documenting variables that appear to be associated with positive youth outcomes, there is still a need not only for more rigorous empirical data, but, more specifically, for research examining the differential importance of these variables. Currently we have a composite picture of elements that are associated with high-quality programs, but is it possible to separate these variables? Are there some variables that are more important than others? Where should efforts and funds be focused when working with limited resources? These are questions that have yet to be answered in any decisive manner through empirical research.

Beckett, Hawken, & Jacknowitz (2001) surveyed the research literature to determine what qualities were associated with high-quality afterschool programs, and they grouped these practices into three categories: staff management practices, program management practices, and community contacts. Staff management practices included hiring and retaining educated staff, training staff, and providing attractive compensation. Some examples of good program management practices include programs that provide a variety of age-appropriate activities, programs that have a low child-to-staff ratio, programs that are connected to but also complement the regular school day, and programs that have clear goals and evaluation methods. Examples of strong community contacts would include involving families in the program, using volunteers in the program, and connecting with community-based organizations.

The New York State Afterschool Network (NYSAN)² has identified 10 essential elements of program quality afterschool programs these consists of: (a) environment/climate; (b) administration/organization; (c) relationships; (d) staffing/professional development; (e) programming/activities; (f) academic alignment/achievement; (g) youth participation/engagement; (h) parent/family/community partnerships; (i) program sustainability/growth; and (j) measuring outcomes/ evaluation.

The Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool/Youth Development Network (PSAYDN)³ has created a Program Quality Value Statement that consists of Guiding Principles for providing quality afterschool programming. These elements consist of: (a) structure and management, (b) positive connections, (c) safety and health, and (d) activities. A single program may have varying levels of quality for different components of the program (Lauer et al., 2006). For example, a program that has strong relationships between staff and students might not be as strong in academics or a program that excels in academics and relationships might not be as strong at family and community connections.

Another way of considering program quality is Durlak and Weissberg's approach (2007), which identified four evidence-based qualities (sequenced, active, focused, and explicit) that are essential for programs to show positive academic and social outcomes.

² NYSAN's Quality Self-Assessment Tool can be retrieved at

www.nysan.org/section/quality/qa

³ PSAYDN's Guiding Practices Document can be retrieved at <http://www.psaydn.org/>

Sequenced means that program activities are being taught in a logical, orderly fashion, where small steps and accomplishments lead to larger, more complex learning. Active refers to students having opportunities to put their learning into practice through hands-on activities and to receive regular feedback from program staff about their learning.

Focused and explicit means that the program has at least one component devoted to developing social skills and that those skills are clearly defined, such as self-control or problem-solving skills. In their meta-analysis, Durlak and Weissberg found that 39 programs that exhibited all four qualities demonstrated favorable academic and social outcomes, including improved feelings of self-confidence and self-esteem, school bonding, positive social behaviors, school grades and achievement test scores, and reduced problem behaviors and drug use. The 27 programs that did not have all four qualities did not produce statistically significant results.

Although there remains a need for more rigorous empirical evidence about what are the most important elements necessary to create high quality afterschool and OST programs, already, we can start seeing trends in characteristics that distinguish high-quality afterschool programs. Almost all of the studies concur on the importance of certain elements including: (a) safety; (b) staff training; (c) relationship between staff and youth; (d) intentional, developmentally appropriate, and authentic learning; (e) strong leadership. I considered these definitions of quality in this dissertation study as informed criterion in selecting my research site location.

A Framework to Approaching Quality Out-of-School Time Programming

The Program in Education, Afterschool, and Resiliency (PEAR), at Harvard University and McLean Hospital, developed a framework with three sides of a triangle

known as the “Quality Triangle”, to organize the growing number of lists created by various studies of quality features in OST programs by capturing the strongest recurring factors. They found that the majority of features found to be associated with high quality programs fit in three general areas: Activities, Curricula, and Learning; Programmatic Support Structures and Leadership; Staff Capacity, Training, and Relational Care. They arranged the three areas in a triangle framework to indicate the need to address all three sides of the triangle to create high quality OST programming.

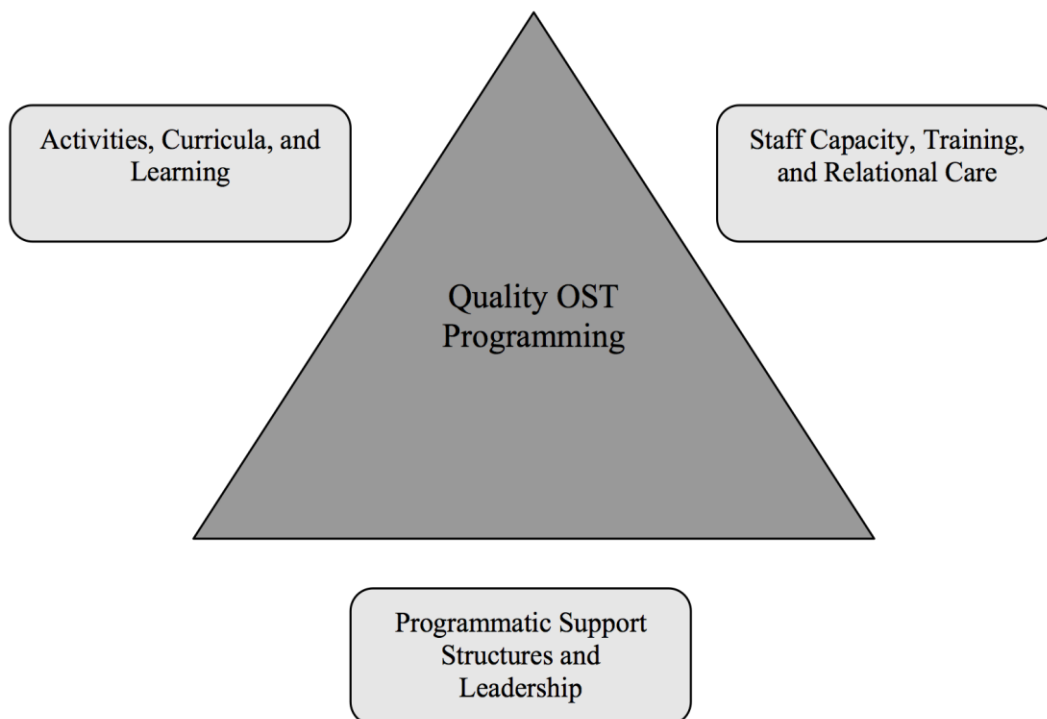


Figure 2.1 Quality Triangle

Source: Gil Noam, May 2008

Evaluations of Afterschool Programs

Telfair & Leviton (1999) notes that one of the primary challenges for evaluators of community-based programs is the design and implementation of assessments that are useful and relevant, as well as rigorous (Patton, 1997). The scientific rigor debate (Smith & Brandon, 2008) is fundamental to the role of the evaluators in producing knowledge to advance educational theory, practice, and policy. Strong research designs must be both rigorous and robust. Rigor addresses the extent to which an evaluation adheres to strict standards of research methodology; robustness refers to the degree to which changes can be explained by the program rather than by such other factors as school and student characteristics (Fashola, 2004). This is essential for a robust understanding of program effects on communities of color and other underrepresented groups.

While those within the field have different ideas about what outcomes afterschool programs should be attempting to reach, funders from outside the field have required programs to specify outcomes and to measure them to determine the effectiveness of their investments (Mahoney & Zigler, 2006). The C. S. Mott Foundation published resources to assist programs with selecting short-term and long-term outcomes and various methods for measuring them (2005), and the Harvard Family Research Project created an online database of research and program evaluations specific to out-of-school time. Results about the effectiveness of afterschool programs have been mixed with some showing encouraging academic and social gains for children (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007; Jenner & Jenner, 2007; Posner & Vandell, 1999) and others showing little to no academic gains as a result of afterschool program participation (US Department of Education 2003; Zief & Lauver, 2006). Fashola (1998) called the state of program evaluation in the OST field

rudimentary, and Roth et al. (1998) characterized the field as having a paucity of high-quality program evaluations.

Although the final version was not published until 2002, Fashola (1998) undertook the first systematic assessment of OST program impacts in the late 1990s. Specifically, Fashola reviewed evaluations of afterschool and extended-school-day programs that had an educational focus and were used with youth from underserved populations. The review was intended to identify programs with strong evidence of effectiveness and of replicability. In addition, the program evaluations had to provide enough information to measure effect sizes. Fashola found 34 program evaluations that met these criteria; many of them were used during the school day, or the afterschool part of the program was not evaluated. These fell into five categories: (a) language arts afterschool programs; (b) study-skills programs; (c) academic programs in other curriculum areas; (d) tutoring programs for reading; and (e) community-based programs. While Fashola notes that most of the evaluations did not meet minimal acceptable research standards, she tentatively concludes that there is some evidence that afterschool programs might positively impact academic outcomes. Of the 11 programs that were evaluated in afterschool settings, 6 showed some evidence of positive effect on an array of academic outcomes.

Scott-Little, Hamann, and Jurs (2002) undertook a fairly similar assessment of the literature, but with greater selectivity in terms of the rigor of the evaluation design. The authors performed a meta-evaluation, making judgments about the quality, merit, and worth of the evaluation, but were unable to perform a full meta-analysis due to lack of sufficient description and data in the evaluation reports. Twenty-three studies were

identified that fit their selection criteria for evaluations of direct-service programs, excluding direct mentoring or tutoring. Of the 23 programs, only 15 reported outcome data for participants; the majority of these were either pre-experimental (i.e., no control group was used) or quasi-experimental. Only two evaluations used an experimental design. Like Fashola, they concluded that the overall story emerging from the literature is encouraging. In particular, they argue that results suggest that participants might score higher across a range of academic impacts and on measures of socio-emotional functioning. Nonetheless, they note that further research is needed to draw firm conclusions about the impacts of afterschool programs.

The last major review released prior to the release of the 21st CCLC evaluation was by Hollister (2003). To deal with selection bias in most data sources, Hollister restricted his assessment to only the most rigorous evaluation designs—experimental designs—of which he identified ten. Despite this restriction, he found that a number of the gold-standard evaluations suffered methodological flaws. For example, one study randomly assigned students applying to a program to the intervention or control group, thus ensuring that the two groups were similar in every way (including motivation to sign up). In the analysis, however, the treatment group included students who attended the program at least 50 percent of the time for some of the analysis and at least 80 percent of the time for other parts of the analysis. Students who signed up but did not attend and students who did attend but at low rates were included in the control group, thus undermining the strength of random-assignment design. Overall, overlooking these types of study-design flaws, Hollister concluded that these programs did show a positive effect on some academic outcomes (including achievement tests, grades, and graduation) and

some nonacademic outcomes (including substance use, hitting someone, skipping school, relationships with peers and parents, dropout and child-bearing, and police record). He also noted that there might be links between certain program components and outcomes. In particular, (a) mentoring or tutoring might have positive effects on academic and some nonacademic outcomes; (b) parent involvement and training are sometimes effective components for nonacademic outcomes; and (c) life-skills curricula might be effective for some OST outcomes.

In *The Effectiveness of Out-of-School-Time Strategies in Assisting Low-Achieving Students in Reading and Mathematics: A Research Synthesis* (Lauer et al., 2003), the researchers asked, What was the effectiveness of OST strategies in assisting low-achieving or at-risk students in reading and mathematics? They turned to 56 studies (47 with reading outcomes and 33 with math outcomes) to address this question. They conclude that the programs in the aggregate were effective for low-performing and at-risk students. For reading outcomes, the results suggested that a reading intervention has an overall effect size of 0.06 to 0.13 for low-income or at-risk students; for mathematics intervention, the estimated effect size is 0.09 to 0.17. A strength of this report is that it tested the potential role of different moderators or factors that influence the strength of the intervention or program effects. Reading interventions appeared to be most effective among early elementary-school students (K–2), where mathematics interventions had stronger effects among high-school students (9–12). For mathematics (but not reading), mixing academic and social activities appeared to be most effective. For reading, impacts were greatest for one-on-one tutoring interventions. Finally, programs that had more hours of instruction (more than 44 hours, but not more than 210 hours) had positive

outcomes. (If real, such a pattern might reflect developmental differences in the value of social interaction with peers and appropriate duration or dosage; adolescents might require more variety of activities than early elementary-school students.)

Critical Hours: Afterschool Programs and Educational Success, by Beth Miller (2003), examined what the literature says about the link between OST and success, especially for early adolescents. The review included a summary of evaluations of afterschool programs for school-age children and early adolescents (middle-school students). Miller drew stronger conclusions than earlier reviewers from the same research base about the positive impacts of these programs. Although she discusses some study limitations, the potential problems these limitations cast on being able to interpret program impacts was not sufficiently discussed.

From the careful review of the literature of evaluations conducted in afterschool programs, it seems that they were mostly all quantitative in design. As a qualitative researcher, I note that it is also critically important to capture the story behind the numbers. Qualitative methods allow for multiple data sources, which provide varied perspectives and also allows for a complete, detailed description of the participants' experiences. As many of the afterschool evaluation results show in the above described studies, the outcome were not significant in nature or did not show an overwhelming positive effect for the students attending the afterschool program. As an avid champion for quality afterschool programs, I hear stories from the field, whether it is through causal conversations, testimonials, or success stories captured in grant proposals, about the benefits that afterschool programs have on the successful development of youth participants, families, schools and the community. The Institute of Education Sciences

(IES) published a practice guide in education entitled, *Structuring Out-of-School Time to Improve Academic Performance* (2009), that intended to help educators, out-of-school time (OST) program providers, and school and district administrators structure academically focused out-of-school time programs. The practice guide offered five recommendations to improve the ability of OST programs to benefit students academically. The recommendations provided strategies that ranged from the design, instruction, and evaluation of the afterschool programs. Very rarely do I hear stories about the positive impact of in-service teacher development as a result of being involved in a quality afterschool program. Hence, this dissertation study addresses a gap in the extant literature of afterschool programs bridging the gap between school, family, and community partnerships, in forming in-service teachers' knowledge learning development. This study investigated in-service teacher beliefs' and pedagogy of becoming culturally responsive teachers by working with African American youth attending afterschool school programs located in underserved communities.

Benefits of Afterschool Programs

Benefits of afterschool extend beyond the classroom and into the community. More communities are recognizing that partnering with schools strengthens the community at large. Community leaders and stakeholders, especially in urban areas, are looking for opportunities to help improve the academic, social and professional skills of students (Jehl, J., et al., 2001). Quality afterschool programs can effectively link communities and schools. The benefits of community involvement in education through afterschool are tangible and real. The community as a whole benefits from having well-rounded youth who are productive and responsible community members (Fletcher, A.J. et

al, 2005). Adults and community members are able to reconsider any negative stereotypes they have of youth when they have positive interactions with young people. They are then more likely to hold a positive view of young people, voice their support for afterschool, and play an active role by volunteering or mentoring (Fletcher, A.J. et al, 2005). When students feel connected, supported and safe, they are more likely to make healthy choices for themselves, including avoiding risky behaviors and staying in school. Afterschool programs provide children and youth not only with academic support, but a safe, nurturing environment that can help bolster social and emotional development, critical to academic success (Hall, G., et al., 2003).

Complementary Learning

Complementary learning strategy, developed by the Harvard Family Research Project, is the idea that a systematic approach—which intentionally integrates both school and non-school supports—can better ensure that all children have the skills they need to succeed. Educators, policymakers, and families increasingly agree: schools cannot do it alone. Children need multiple opportunities to learn and grow—at home, in school, and in the community. Complementary learning is a comprehensive strategy for addressing all of these needs and ensuring success for all children and youth. Afterschool is at its best when it complements and coordinates with – but does not replicate – the learning that occurs during the formal school day (Afterschool Alliance, 2011). Quality afterschool programs work with communities to connect children and youth with resources, community-based organizations, volunteers, and mentors. Afterschool programs can help schools move beyond the constraints of the regular day and embrace the surrounding neighborhood, capitalizing on the resources, assets, and perspectives of organizations and

individuals outside the school. To this end, afterschool programs are a solid bridge connecting schools and communities. Partnerships forged through afterschool offer students a way to achieve academically, socially, emotionally, vocationally, civically, and physically (Kahne, J. et al., 2001).

Successful afterschool programs recognize the importance of strong community connections and actively pursue them. The benefits of such collaboration are many and include: (a) greater relevance of curriculum for students; (b) increased student responsibility for learning, (c) improved linkages between school and community; (d) improved problem-solving; (e) teaming, higher order thinking, time management, and other vital skills that benefit students' school achievement and workplace readiness; (f) expanded learning environments; (g) greater motivation of reluctant learners; (h) enhanced problem solving and conflict management skills; and (i) reduced behavior and truancy problems. The Afterschool Alliance Issue Brief, *Aligning Afterschool with the Regular School Day: The Perfect Complement* (2011), outlined several aspects of afterschool provide advantages for students that are more difficult to offer during the regular school day:

- flexible schedules, providing the time and space to offer in-depth learning projects;
- low student-to-instructor ratios;
- more flexibility for field trips and learning outside the classroom;
- informal learning environments that encourage active participation;
- greater access to parents because programs often extend into the early evening;

- a diverse group of workers who can connect with youth in new and meaningful ways;
- community partners that can address specific needs of children and fill gaps in enrichment.

Afterschool programs can operate as true intermediaries, connecting children's diverse worlds in order to support learning. Afterschool programs act as 'intermediary spaces' (Noam, 2001) because they are "produced by vibrant collaborations between different institutions and forces such as schools, families, community-based organizations and cultural institutions and university programs" (Noam, Biancarosa, & Dechausay, 2003). In moving from home to school, to afterschool to home, children traverse multiple worlds and typically each of these worlds has its own internal consistency (Noam, Pucci, & Foster, 1999, see also Aikenhead, 1996; Au, 1980; Erickson & Mohatt, 1982; Heath, 1982; McLaughlin, 1993). Phelan, Davidson, and Yu (1998) explain that the term "worlds" applies in this context because it connotes the "cultural knowledge and behavior found within the boundaries of students' particular families, peer groups, and schools" and further "each world contains values and beliefs, expectations, actions, and emotional responses familiar to insiders." (p. 7)

Bridging Schools and Afterschool Programs

As noted by Noam et.al (2008), many attempts to bridge directly from homes to schools tend to overlook or minimize the fact that minority parents often feel that their relationships with schools resemble a "confrontation" more than a collaboration over their children's education (Calabrese, 1990). At the very least, direct home and school bridging would require systematic training and significant institutional changes in order

to be possible (Calabrese, 1990; Erickson & Mohatt, 1982). But the diverse home and school worlds of children might also be bridged in an alternative way: through afterschool programs. Afterschool programs inherently fall somewhere between the two worlds of home and school.

Indeed, John and Leacock (1979) argue that learning “can often take place better in the community” than in the school, precisely because the community offers more continuity with children’s home lives (p. 88). Afterschool programs can serve as a bridge between incongruous worlds, facilitating the transition between worlds and making choices between them seem less necessary. Moll and Diaz (1993) emphasize the role of afterschool and community-based settings as mediators, creating “strategic connections between schools and communities” (p. 68). As noted by Noam (2008), McLaughlin (1993) reports that community out-of-school programs see themselves as mediators or mediums and judge their own success “primarily in terms of helping youth to achieve ‘balance’ – sure footing and sense of purpose – in their communities as well as an ability to negotiate different roles in different places – to draw on an array of features to give them several identities, all of which are anchored in a secure sense of self” (p.38).

In order to explore what some of the issues are that support bridging between schools and afterschool programs, Gil Noam, Gina Biancarosa and Nadine Dechaussay of the PEAR Center at Harvard University, conducted a research project and interviewed leaders in the OST field, visited numerous afterschool programs, and reviewed existing literature to create a typology of learning and bridging. Using Max Weber’s approach to ideal typing, they created a typology that displays and describes the intensity of bridging in programs. The researchers used a scale of intensity from Self-Contained (programs

and schools that do not interact interpersonally or organizationally) to Unified (programs and schools that have been brought together such that there is no distinction between the two institutions). Between these poles they distinguished three other types—Associated, Coordinated, and Integrated—with each representing a gradual increase in bridging intensity from one pole to the other (see Figure 2.2).

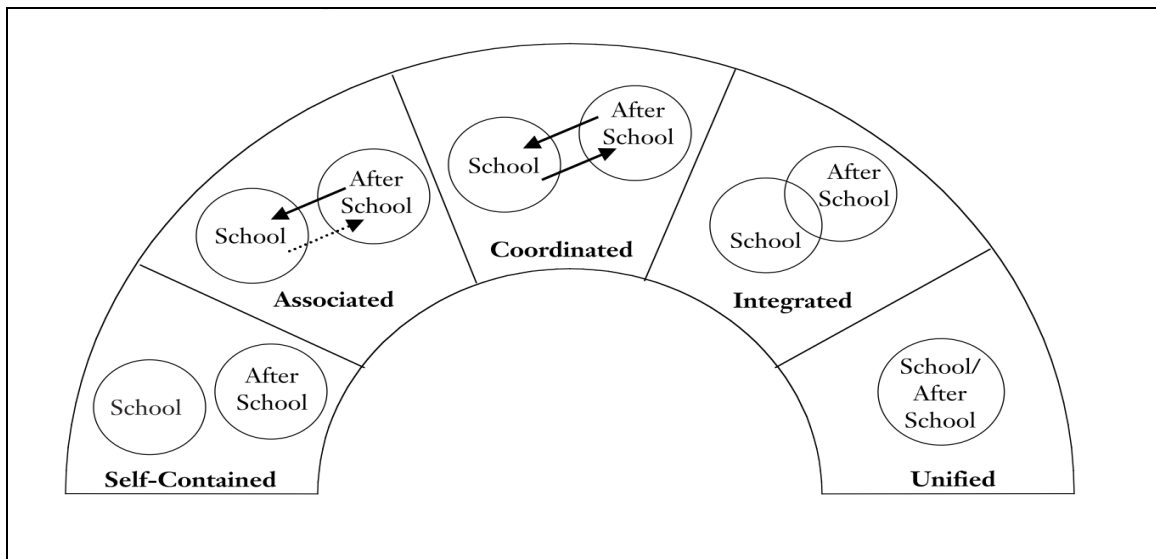


Figure 2.2 The Five Types of Bridging Between Schools and Afterschool Programs

Source: Gil G. Noam, Gina Biancarosa, and Nadine Dechausay, September 2002

Practitioners face the challenge of negotiating delicate relationships with youth in settings that provide less support and structure than schools, and “knowledge of what youth go through in the networks and neighborhoods in which they live” is an invaluable tool in this endeavor (McLaughlin et al., 1994, p. 133). Thus, the ability to traverse multiple worlds is not only something that programs help children to do, but also something that the staff at the program must practice themselves. In as much, a review of literature is needed to explore culturally responsive teaching practices in a way to

develop classroom to work more effectively with African American students from underserved backgrounds. The next section of the literature review will explore the key scholarship and tenets pertaining to culturally responsive pedagogy.

Culture in the Classroom

In the literature, there is a multiplicity of frameworks and terms used to discuss cultural teaching approaches. For more than a decade, culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994), culturally responsive teaching (Gay 2000), and similar approaches to multicultural education (Banks, 1993, 2005; Banks & Banks, 1998; Grant, 1992; Nieto 1999; Sleeter & Grant; 1996; Sleeter & McLaren, 1996) have been examined and advanced in teacher education (Dancy & Horsford, 2010, pg.160). The development and tenets of these frameworks are explained below to provide a foundation. For the purposes of this research study, I will use the term culturally responsive teaching. Gay (2002) defined culturally responsive teaching as the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively.

Culturally relevant pedagogy. Gloria Ladson-Billings has focused her scholarly efforts and research on multicultural education, social studies, critical race theory and education, and culturally relevant pedagogy. In her publication of *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children* (2004), she examined the work of a group of excellent teachers who were able to meet the educational needs of African American students through effective teaching rather than a prescription or recipe of culturally responsive and culturally relevant pedagogical practices that make a difference for students of color. Gloria Ladson-Billings, popularized the term "culturally relevant

teaching" (1992, 1994, 1995), says it "empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (p. 18).

Culturally responsive pedagogy. Geneva Gay has dedicated many years to researching multicultural education in her quest to improve the education of students of color who are not achieving well in our public schools. In her book, *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice*, Gay (2000) draws on case studies and research she conducted, as well as her personal teaching experiences, that use the theoretical underpinning of culturally responsive pedagogy. Geneva Gay (2000) defines culturally relevant pedagogy as "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them" (p. 29). She adds that this pedagogy is one that "teaches to and through" (p. 29) the strengths of culturally diverse students.

Gay (2000) details six characteristics of culturally responsive pedagogy: it is validating, comprehensive, multidimensional, empowering, transformative, and emancipatory, each quality manifesting differently in classroom practice. Using the six characteristics of culturally responsive pedagogy as outlined by Gay (2002), I will review and frame the major tenets of culturally responsive pedagogy.

Culturally responsive pedagogy is validating. The underpinning characteristic of culturally responsive pedagogy is its "culturally validating and affirming" nature (Gay, 2000, p. 29), which allows space for teaching practices that consider all students -not just those from privileged backgrounds - as having resources that may be foundational to their learning (Nieto, 2003). These resources include their languages, cultures, and

experiences. A teacher who practices culturally relevant pedagogy "utilizes students' culture as a vehicle for learning" (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, p. 3), "acknowledg[ing] the legitimacy of the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups, both as legacies that affect students' dispositions, attitudes, and approaches to learning and worthy content to be taught in the formal curriculum" (Gay, 2000, p. 29). Valerie Ooka-Pang (2001) refers to "cultural content" as including elements such as experiences, knowledge, events, values, role models, perspectives, and issues that arise from the community from which the student comes. Pang (2001) explains that "cultural models in schools can make learning more meaningful because they tap into what children already know about the world and act as important scaffolding" (p. 32).

Ultimately, learning becomes increasingly meaningful for students. In describing why culturally responsive teaching is both validating and affirming, Geneva Gay (2000) provides a five-point summary of components of culturally relevant pedagogy can be useful to teachers:

- (1) it acknowledges the legitimacy of the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups;
- (2) it connects school and home experiences;
- (3) it uses different instructional strategies to address all learning styles;
- (4) it teaches students to value their own cultural heritage and that of others;
- (5) it incorporates multicultural materials into the curriculum.

Culturally responsive pedagogy is comprehensive. A second fundamental theme emerging from scholarly work pertaining to culturally responsive pedagogy is that it is comprehensive (Gay, 2000), meaning it employs a holistic viewpoint addressing the whole child. Teaching from a holistic approach by adopting a "we" and "our" philosophy

is exemplified in Ladson-Billings' (1994) seminal study of teachers who practice culturally relevant teaching with African-American students. She found that when students were part of an increasingly collective effort designed to encourage academic and cultural excellence, expectations were clearly expressed, skills taught, and interpersonal relations were exhibited. Furthermore, students were held accountable as part of a larger group, and it was everyone's task to make certain that each individual member of the group was successful. By promoting this community of learners, teachers responded to the students' need for a sense of belonging, honored their human dignity, and promoted their individual self-concepts. Research shows that the degree to which a school is able to foster community influences students' sense of belonging, which has been shown to impact at-risk behavior (dropping-out of school), academic motivation and other positive school related affect (Anderman, 2003, pp.6-7). Such educators are committed to helping culturally diverse students connect with their ethnic groups and cultural communities, develop a sense of camaraderie and shared responsibility and acquire an ethic of success that permeates all curriculum content and interactions in the classroom (Gay, 2000). In this way, students are expected to internalize the notion that "learning is a communal, reciprocal, interdependent affair, and manifest it habitually in their expressive behaviors" (Gay, 2000, p. 30).

Culturally responsive pedagogy is multidimensional. Gay (2000) describes culturally responsive pedagogy as necessarily multidimensional, encompassing numerous factors such as "curriculum content, learning context, classroom climate, student-teacher relationships, instructional techniques, and performance assessments" (p. 31). Culturally responsive teachers feel personally, not simply professionally, invested in their

instructional beliefs and practices (Villegas, 1988; Ladson- Billings, 1995a, Sleeter & McLaren, 1995). They attempt to create a caring relationship with all their students. Beyond having a fluid and caring relationship with students, teachers practicing culturally responsive pedagogy are supportive of and have high expectations for all their students (Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Gay, 2000). They believe students' backgrounds and their culture are assets—rather than deficits—and should be used in the service of their learning to develop skills to teach all students effectively (Nieto, Felix, & Gelzinis, 2002).

Research suggests that when students are aware that their teachers hold them to high expectations, they strive to meet those expectations. This results in increased academic and social achievement, as well as personal confidence in their abilities (Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994). In his study, Tyrone Howard (2000) observed a fourth-grade class, discovering that a teacher's care for students was displayed through numerous behaviors. Howard's observed behaviors include: encouraging students' best efforts, verbally expressing high expectations for performance and making direct statements about how the teacher felt about the students. Howard explains that the "students' love and respect for teachers come with teachers' high expectations and with teachers' setting achievable standards for diverse students" (p. 6). He found that students were able to identify teachers' desire for student success.

Culturally responsive pedagogy is empowering. Central to culturally responsive pedagogy is the belief that schools should be empowering (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995a), transforming (Gay, 2000; Banks, 1991) and emancipating (Gay, 2000) culturally diverse students. It is through critical analysis of the effects of inequalities on different

individuals and groups that the transformative nature of culturally relevant pedagogy becomes apparent. Gay (2000) explains that this pedagogy aims for "students [to] become change agents committed to promoting greater equality, justice and power balances among ethnic groups" (p. 34). In this way, students develop the knowledge, skills and values they need to become actively participatory in shaping their own learning and becoming social critics who can make reflective decisions and implement their decisions through effective action. These students practice these values and skills in different community contexts such as the classroom, the school and their neighborhoods. In this way, developing social consciousness and personal efficacy in students is paramount so that they may be capable to combat racism and other forms of oppression. Ladson-Billings (1995) explains that culturally relevant pedagogical practices aim to support students in "developing a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order by critiquing the cultural norms, values and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities" (p. 162). In this way, "culturally relevant teachers view their classrooms as key sites of resistance" (Delpit, 1988, p. 43), as the status quo is critically scrutinize and contested.

Paulo Freire's (1970) notion of "conscientization", or the process that invites learners to critically engage with the world and others (as cited in McLauren, 1989, p. 195) is reflected in the tenets of culturally relevant pedagogy. Students in classrooms where educators enact this pedagogy are empowered, as they develop critical thinking skills that allow them to examine dominant social discourses. Freire (1970) details two approaches to learning: the banking system and the mining process. The banking system of learning is one wherein teachers dispense information, chiefly in lecture format, which

students are expected to memorize. This approach is adamantly discouraged by advocates of culturally relevant teaching. Instead, advocates promote a mining approach wherein teachers provide instructional scaffolding, permitting students to build upon their own experiences, knowledge and skills as a foundation for further inquiry among peers (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 1999; Montgomery, 2001). Teachers who practice culturally relevant pedagogy empower not only students by incorporating their interests and cultural backgrounds (Corson, 1998), but they also empower and transform themselves by lifting the burden of being the class expert. As a result, co-creation of knowledge occurs with students in a learning community where open dialogue and questioning are encouraged (Harding, London, & Safer, 2001).

Culturally responsive pedagogy is transformative. As noted in Gay (2010), James A. Banks (1991) contends that if education is to empower marginalized groups, it must be transformative. Being transformative involves helping “students to develop the knowledge, skill, and values needed to become social critics who make reflective decisions and implement their decisions in effective personal, social, political, and economic action” (p. 131). Gay (2010) explains:

the transformative agenda of culturally responsive teaching is double-focused, “involving one direction that deals with confronting and transcending the cultural hegemony nested in much of the curriculum content and classroom instruction of traditional education, as well as another direction that develops social consciousness, intellectual critique, and political personal efficacy in students so that they can combat prejudices, racism, and other forms of oppression and exploitation (p. 37).”

Culturally responsive pedagogy is emancipatory. Culturally responsive teaching is considered to be liberating in that it promotes freedom and releases students of color from being confined to mainstream knowledge of knowing and learning (Gay, 2010). As cited in Gay (2010), these learning engagements encourage and enable students to find their own voices, to contextualize issues in multiple cultural perspectives, to engage in more ways of knowing and thinking, and to become more active participants in shaping their own learning (Crichlow et al., 1990, J. King & Wilson, 1990; Ladson-Billings & Henry, 1990). Paulo Freire's (1980) proposes that critical consciousness and cultural emancipation are the gateways to each other.

Culture in the Classroom Summary

The literature I reviewed gives the frame that is required to understand afterschool programs and culturally responsive pedagogy. Allen and Boykin (1992), Cummins (1989, 1996), Ladson-Billings (1994, 1995) and others argue that students can benefit from the incorporation of their home cultures into schooling, although they acknowledge it will not eliminate all the disadvantages they face. Contemporary advocates do not claim that theories such as culturally responsive pedagogy will by themselves eliminate all the major factors that produce exclusion and disadvantage in our educational system. Nonetheless, they claim that they can help in many cases. Culturally responsive teachers work to soften a disconnection many culturally different students feel between their home lives and school. Ladson-Billings (1994) argues that those teachers who practice in a culturally relevant manner have relationships with students that "extend to interactions beyond the classroom and into the community" (p. 55). These teachers help students

build bridges between school learning and their communities, by drawing on the expertise of community members, namely the children's parents. Those who practice this pedagogy consciously find ways to facilitate out of school interaction, as they recognize that parents are crucially important partners in their practice and the education of their child. Nieto (1996) asserts that regular communication with parents is an important aspect of a child's educational progress. When families share their funds of knowledge with the school community, teachers learn of their students' background knowledge and abilities and how they learn best (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). In this way, culturally responsive teachers strive to know, as much as possible, about the children they teach in order to facilitate their learning (Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Not only are the connections between home and school strengthened, but appreciating students' cultural knowledge conveys to students that their culture and families have knowledge and experiences that their teachers values and holds to high regard, ultimately influencing the way in which they view their culture. While there is a movement within teacher education programs to include more critical multicultural education and culturally responsive pedagogy (Villegas & Lucas, 2002), there remains a large segment of the practicing teaching population that is unaware of the philosophy behind the theory. This current study explores this pedagogy in relation to teachers' beliefs', backgrounds, and descriptions of how they practice. Currently, much of the literature on equitable education practices, and in particular, on culturally responsive pedagogy focuses on the experiences of African American students during the formal school day (Ladson-Billings, 1990, 1994; Tate, 1995; Howard, 2000, 2001, 2001). Given that this study was conducted in an afterschool setting, it seeks to contribute to the

literature by adding the perspectives of in-service teachers who develop culturally responsive pedagogical practices through working with African American students from underserved communities in quality afterschool programs.

Social Justice and Educational Leadership: Inequalities in Educating African American Youth

There are many problems facing African American youth concerning academic achievement. Those problems include funding disparities, teacher inequalities, and a boring and disengaging curriculum. Minority and low-income students in urban settings are most likely to find themselves in classrooms staffed by inadequately prepared, inexperienced, and ill-qualified teachers because funding inequalities, distributions of local power, labor market conditions, and dysfunctional hiring practices that conspire to produce teacher shortages of which they bear the brunt.

Barry (2005) proposed that we should regard the demands of social justice as being met to the extent that there are equal educational attainments at the age of 18. He further explains that the process of cumulative advantage and disadvantage for the case of education of different children are already set to some degree by the time they are born, and that at every stage those who already lag behind tend to fall behind further (pp.68-69). Furthermore, once the children are in school the odds are very high that the differences in environment to which they have already been exposed will continue to exist, providing the already advantaged children with continuing advantages that compensatory education is unlikely to be powerful enough to reverse (Barry, 2005). He also notes that in a society dedicated to the pursuit of social justice, intensive research efforts would be devoted to finding out the best ways to overcome the disadvantages that

children carry with them in to the school system – and continue to suffer – from –as a consequence of their home and neighborhood environment (p. 55). An educational framework for social justice must value, rather than, ignore diversity and inequalities in the education of African American youth.

Social justice in education is reflected in a curriculum and school personnel who honor students' languages and cultures, fosters appreciation of difference, and engage in a moral use of power that resists discrimination and inequity (American Educational Research, Leadership for Social Justice Special Interest Group, n.d.). According to the Education Trust in a 2005 report, no state can claim it is truly addressing the achievement gap without seriously addressing the funding gap. Achievement is impacted by dollars spent on a rich curriculum taught by expert teachers who are supported professionally and have access to the materials they need a system of identifying and providing extra help to children who are struggling. If schools were truly interested in closing the achievement gap, then low-achieving students would receive the most experienced teachers and the greatest resources. But schools, which are controlled by the upper and middle-class populations whose children are in high achieving groups, have no intention of implementing such a policy. According to Darling-Hammond (2000), urban high-poverty students are taught by more under prepared, and less experienced teachers, which contributes to that disparities in achievement among the majority and minority populations. The very children who most need strong teachers are assigned, on average, to teachers with less experience, less education, and less skill than those who teach other children.

Research has confirmed that effective educators can improve the academic outcomes of low-income students and provide them with hope and promise for the future (McKinney et al., 69). Disparities in teaching quality are a long-standing reality for African-American students. In “Closing the Divide,” Robert Dreebeen (1987) describes the results of his study of reading instruction and outcomes for 300 Black and White first graders across seven schools in the Chicago area. He found that differences in reading outcomes among students were almost entirely explained, not socio-economic status or race, but the quality of instruction the students received. However, the study also found that the quality of instruction received by African-American students, on average, was much lower than that received by Whites students, thus creating a racial gap in aggregate achievement at the end of the first grade.

This information is very disheartening because teacher quality is the biggest single factor in impacting student learning and achievement. Without mastery of content, academic knowledge, experience, and pedagogical skills, the teacher’s preparation is inadequate. This is a serious educational injustice and it further sends the message of segregation within our school system. Furthermore, Darling-Hammond (2000, 2003) notes that studies have consistently found that, with little knowledge of learning or child development to guide them, teachers who lack preparation rely more on: (a) rote methods of learning; (b) are more autocratic in the ways they manage their classrooms; (c) are less skilled at managing complex forms of instruction aimed at deeper understanding; (d) are less capable of identifying children's learning styles and needs; and (e) are less likely to see it as their job to do so, blaming many students when their teaching is not successful.

Representing more than four decades of ongoing research in urban teacher education, Haberman's *Star Teachers: The ideology and Best Practice of Effective Teachers of Diverse Children and Youth in Poverty* (2005) and *Star Teachers of Poverty* (1995) identified 15 characteristics of effective urban teachers. These characteristics include: (a) protecting children's learning; (b) persistence; (c) approach to at-risk youth; (d) theory into practice; (e) professional/personal orientation to students, (f), fallibility; (g) emotional and physical stamina; (h) organizational ability; (i) explanation of teacher success; (j) explanation of children's success; (k) real teaching; (l) making students feel needed; (m) the material versus the student, and (n) gentle teaching in a violent society. He referred to those educators who possess these characteristics as "star teachers" and pointed out that their ideology separates them from teachers who are not successful teacher in urban school setting. Star teachers are able to capture the spirit of learning for all students regardless of their socioeconomic status, background, life circumstances, or life experiences.

Curriculum inequalities. In addition to being taught by less qualified teachers than their White and suburban counterparts, urban and minority students face dramatic differences in courses, curriculum, materials, and equipment. Unequal access to high-level courses and challenging curriculum explains much of the difference in achievement between minority students and White students. A narrow relevant curriculum fights with the mythology that does not recognize children learn in other ways besides the written approach. Peter Murrell, Jr. in, *African-Centered Pedagogy*, argues that accomplished teachers of African-American students create an intellectual and cultural environment that stimulates learning. They understand and appreciate African-American culture,

history, and language and continue to study to learn more. Accomplished teachers of African-American children understand the distinction between training and educating and decide to do the latter. He also writes that the national concern about the “achievement gap” places the onus on African-American children and the high stakes of culturally biased standardized achievement tests. He believes that the fundamental problem is that schools have not provided quality Afrocentric teaching to African-American children. Similarly, Ladson-Billings (1995) argues that social justice leadership goes beyond good leadership. A good leader speaks of success for all children, while a social justice leader ends segregated pull-out programs that prohibit both emotional and academic success for marginalized children. Also, a good leader supports a variety of programs for diverse learners, while a social justice leader strengthens core teaching and curriculum and insures that diverse students have access to that core. Social justice leadership is indeed what good leadership should be.

Chapter Conclusion

Acclaimed author, Toni Morrison, said that, “Too many people are touched, but not moved.” In other words they are merely a sympathetic observer who feels pity for someone and they do not take action in cooperation with others to effect positive social change. When addressing the eight Alabama clergymen in his Letter from the Birmingham Jail in 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., wrote, “Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection.” In essence, what that statement parallels to me is that lukewarm people are like sympathetic observers who may see injustice in a particular situation, such as educational inequalities, but since they do not take a stand for the cause, they might as well agree with the situation. They are silent enablers and are not

part of the solution. Furthermore, Dr. King states in the same letter that, “Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will.” Similarly, when the impact of one of their actions causes harm-even if that harm is unintended-the genuinely changed leaders must “lead by outrage” (Sergiovanni, 1992).

When interviewing participants, I sought to gain an understanding of how they speak of their work in relation to their upbringing, beliefs, and working with African American youth attending a quality afterschool program in an underserved community. My questions were designed to give narrative voice to participants. My attempt is to better understand any connection between how they describe practices as mirrored to tenets of culturally responsive teaching, how their practices go beyond the literature of this field, and the challenges they face in supporting their diverse students. For these reasons, the three research questions that guided this study are:

- 1). From a teacher’s perspective, what role, if any, do quality afterschool programs play in preparing them to effectively educate African American youth from underserved communities?

- 2). What transformative processes are experienced by teachers who decide to work in an afterschool program located in an underserved community?

- 3). What do teachers believe is the role of teacher learning in ensuring teacher effectiveness for educating African-American youth from underserved backgrounds?

Chapter three details information on the methodological aspects I employed in this study. In particular, I will give information on the process of selection and recruitment of participants, the method for use in data collection, the approach used when

analyzing data and the attention given to promote the validity of data analysis in seeking to answer the research questions.

CHAPTER THREE: Methodology

Introduction

Ladson-Billings (2001) contends that cultural competence occurs in classrooms where (a) the teacher understands culture and its role in education; (b) the teacher takes responsibility for learning about student's culture and community; (c) the teacher uses student culture as a basis for learning; and (d) the teacher promotes a flexible use of students local and global culture. Ladson-Billings says that, "Culturally relevant teachers understand that culture is a complex concept that affects every aspect of life. Such teachers are able to recognize their own cultural perspectives and biases" (p. 98).

The primary focus of this study is on in-service teachers' culturally responsive teaching instruction supported and developed through less formal learning and teaching environments. Specifically, I looked at teacher's beliefs, personal narratives, and culturally responsive teaching practices in educating African American youth attending a quality afterschool program in an underserved community. Furthermore, this work investigated whether or not quality afterschool programs attended by African American students from underserved communities can serve as a professional learning community to assist in the development of in-service teachers' culturally responsive pedagogy. The three research questions that guided this study are:

1). From a teacher's perspective, what role, if any, do quality afterschool programs play in preparing them to effectively educate African American youth from underserved communities?

2). What transformative processes are experienced by teachers who decide to work in an afterschool program located in an underserved community?

3). What do teachers believe is the role of teacher learning in ensuring teacher effectiveness for educating African-American youth from underserved backgrounds?

I interviewed eight in-service teachers that work in a quality afterschool program, which serves African American students from underserved communities.

In this chapter, I provide a detailed description of the research methods and procedures employed in this study. In an attempt to remain transparent and enhance reflexivity, this chapter begins with an overview of my researcher's lens of positionality. Secondly, I discuss why a qualitative case study approach to research for this study was most viable. Thirdly, I explain why I choose to employ a narrative method approach. Next, I describe the selection of the site location and participants, the data collection process and analysis techniques that I employed in this study. Then, I specify the steps I took to help ensure this research attends to issues of trustworthiness and validity. Finally, I describe the ethical considerations of the research study.

Researcher's Lens of Positionality

I situated my researcher's narrative in chapter one by explaining that I gained interest in this topic after reflecting upon my school and life experiences that have influenced my professional career path. To expand upon that, I am an African-American

female in my mid-thirties, a parent, a certified teacher, a community educator, an education consultant, and adjunct faculty at a local community college. Many people have always asked me why I chose not to be a teacher in a traditional K-12 classroom setting. My motivation for obtaining my Master's of Arts in Teaching degree was inspired by working with African-American youth that attended a mostly recreational-based afterschool program located within the community that I was raised. The executive director wanted to offer the youth some developmental and transferrable work skills and because of my Bachelor's degree in Business Management, I was hired to work with the youth to teach them business and entrepreneurial skills. As I worked with the students teaching business, mentoring, and life-skills classes, I noticed that most of the youth were struggling academically in spelling, reading, writing, and math. This interaction with the students made me again think upon my experience of being educated in the same public school system that these youth were currently attending. The same public school system failed to challenge me academically and adequately prepare me for college. Therefore, instead of going to school to continue on in business, I decided to get a degree in education to assist the youth in my community and youth from similar backgrounds to advance academically.

While obtaining my Master's in Education, I continued to work at the afterschool program developing programs, activities and curriculum that the youth identified with and that empowered them. At the time I did not know, I was being "culturally responsive". Through my various practicums and student teaching experience in urban school districts, I saw a disconnect between the African American students and their white teachers in regards to relevant connections with the student's school-family-

community life. Culturally responsive teachers work to soften a disconnection many culturally different students feel between their home lives and school. Ladson-Billings (1994) argues that those teachers who practice in a culturally relevant manner have relationships with students that "extend to interactions beyond the classroom and into the community" (p. 55). These teachers help students build bridges between school learning and their communities, by drawing on the expertise of community members, namely the children's parents. Those who practice this pedagogy consciously find ways to facilitate out-of-school interaction, as they recognize that parents are crucially important partners in their practice and the education of their child.

Upon graduating from my Masters program, my decision to remain an educator in the less formal afterschool setting is largely due to my passion for helping students to have a voice and being an advocate for quality learning in the youth's environment. Educating from within and outside the traditional school walls have shaped my lens as a practitioner and researcher. Schumacher (2006) describe positionality as a reflex strategy that assumes that only texts in which researchers display their own positions and contextual grounds for reasoning can be considered good research. To this end, I utilized the theoretical lenses of culturally responsive pedagogy (Erickson, 1987, Gay, 2000, 2002) and Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) for this study.

A Qualitative Approach

In order to answer the research questions, mainly on teacher's beliefs, personal narratives, and culturally responsive teaching practices, a qualitative approach seems to be the most appropriate one. Despite some variances in achieving a common definition about the qualitative approach conceived by scholars, there are some generally agreed

upon principles for conducting qualitative research. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), qualitative research holds the view that knowledge and reality are socially mediated and constructed. Creswell (2003) explains that qualitative research is a process of inquiry based on distinct methodological traditions that explore a social or human problem. Qualitative methods allow for multiple data sources, which provide varied perspectives and also allows for a complete, detailed description of the participants' experiences. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, and reports detailed views of informants. Similarly, Denzin and Lincoln (1995) state that qualitative research "consists of a set of interpretive practices that make the world visible...[through] field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self" (p. 3). A qualitative approach is one that examines and describes the social world. In order to do this, Creswell (2003) explains that the human actor is best understood through capturing social life as people live it, through their experiences and their interpretation of those experiences. I am interested in capturing narratives of how the participants describe, understand, and relate their life experiences with having the desire to work with African American students from underserved communities in a quality afterschool program setting. As a human actor engaged in this research process, I collected data from the participants via structured interviews, relevant document reviews and informal observations. Through this process of engaging, I also shared my educational and career experiences with the participants when appropriate through dialogue discussion.

Maxwell (2005) further identifies numerous intellectual and practical goals for which qualitative studies are especially suited. According to Maxwell, qualitative studies are especially important when the researcher seeks to understand the meanings participants assign to situations, experiences and actions in which they are engaged. I explored the meanings behind participants' described practices and teaching philosophies. Maxwell adds that a qualitative design is most useful when the researcher wants to understand the particular context within which the participants act, and the influence this context has on their actions" (p. 22). An appreciation of context, for this study, is as vital as the afterschool program, the school community, and the classroom in which a teacher works, indubitably influences a teacher's agency in regard to her/his practice. Finally, this study fits a qualitative approach because of its "inherent openness and flexibility" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 22). By way of this study's flexibility, I was able to modify my interview protocol to best address my research questions and allow thorough discussion of what participants deemed important issues. This was done first through creating a comfortable atmosphere during the interview process. Each participant was able to choose the location and time of their interview that was most convenient for them. Also, before the recording of the interviews began, I reviewed the categories of interview questions with the participants which ranged from their family upbringing, K-12 educational experience, teacher education program, to their view of teaching African American youth, and working in an afterschool setting. Some of the participants openly

shared more details in certain categories than others, yet other participants had to be prompted more or asked follow-up questions to get them to elaborate on their responses.

Collective case study research design. Because of the unique opportunities case studies provide for researchers to capture the individual process and development of the investigated phenomenon, I selected a case study approach for my research study. Robert Stake (1995) identifies three types of case studies: intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. An intrinsic case study is conducted when a researcher wants to better understand a specific situation or case. For example, an intrinsic case study would be used to learn about how a particular case (school) approaches eliminating the student achievement gap. This would entail an in depth look at that specific school's procedures. An instrumental case study is a particular case that is examined to provide insights into an issue versus focusing on the particular case. The purpose of this type of case study is to go beyond the case. An instrumental case study becomes a collective case study when it involves looking at several cases (Glesne, 2006; Stake, 2006). A collective case study is a small collection of people, activities, policies, strengths, problems, or relationships that are studied in detail.

I choose to conduct a collective case study because this approach will allow me to study eight unique cases of in-service teachers in an effort to gain a better understanding about issues that are external to any particular case. One of the most distinguishing characteristics of a case study is that the case is a bounded system or single entity from which there are boundaries (Stake, 1995). The collective case approach was selected because each case has its own story and it allows phenomenon to be investigated in a bounded integrated system (Glesne, 2006). The bounded system can be a person,

school, program, a specific policy, or a set of individuals bounded in time and place. The bounded system in this case study is a set of individuals (in-service teachers) who are bounded in a particular context or place (quality afterschool program serving African American youth from underserved communities) and time (out-of-school hours). By studying several cases, “the analytic conclusions independently arising from the cases are more powerful than those coming from a single case” (Yin, 2003, p.53).

Researchers who choose to conduct case studies are interested in the process rather than the outcome of the phenomenon under investigation (Merriam, 1998). For this study, one of my research questions sought to explore the process of change experienced by teachers who decide to work with African American youth from underserved communities that attend a quality afterschool program. Furthermore, using a case study approach allowed me to examine in-depth how the eight participants discussed their beliefs, personal narratives, and culturally responsive teaching practices in educating African American youth attending a quality afterschool program in an underserved community.

Interactive model of research design. Maxwell (2005) encourages qualitative researchers to develop an interactive model of research design for their research studies that is interconnected and flexible in structure. He notes that a good design, one in which the components work harmoniously together, promotes efficient and successful functioning (Maxwell, 2005, pg 2). The five interactive components included in the model are: goals, conceptual framework, research questions, methods and validity concerns. An interactive model of research for this study is shown in Figure 3.1

Narrative Inquiry

Stake (2000) asserts a case study is not a methodological choice, but a choice of what is to be studied. Therefore, my methodological approach will be narrative inquiry. Because of its focus on experience and the qualities of life and education, narrative is situated in a matrix of qualitative research (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Narrative inquiry seeks to understand how individuals describe and perceive their experiences in the context of their lived experiences. Connelly and Clandinin (2006) define narrative inquiry as:

Arguments for the development and use of narrative inquiry come out of a view of human experience in which humans, individually and socially, lead storied lives. People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful. Viewed this way, narrative is the phenomenon studied in inquiry. Narrative inquiry, the study of experience as story, then, is first and foremost a way of thinking about experience. Narrative inquiry as a methodology entails a view of the phenomenon. To use narrative inquiry methodology is to adopt a particular narrative view of experience as phenomena under study (p. 477).

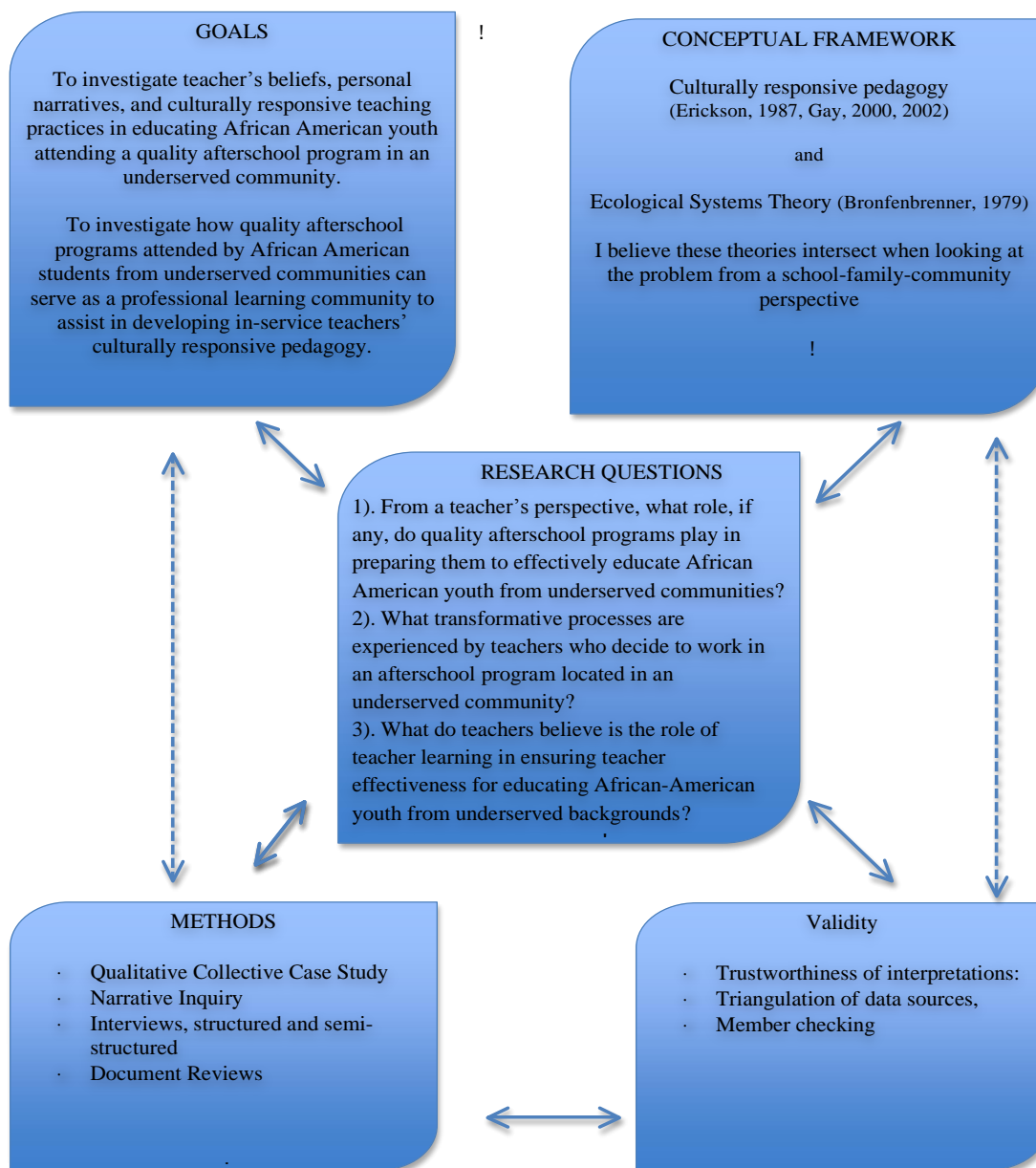


Figure 3.1
An Interactive Model of Research, Maxwell 2005

Experiences occur over time, places, and social interactions with the people and society that surround them and influence their behavior (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). It is a combination of the stories that are lived and told by the participants. As a result of conducting my pilot research study in 2010, as discussed in chapter 1, I gained a keen interest in wanting to explore how teachers' backgrounds and beliefs have informed their pedagogy of working with African American youth from underserved communities in an afterschool setting. I also wanted to explore how these afterschool teaching experiences helped to shape the teachers' culturally responsive pedagogy.

A narrative methodology takes participants' stories and retells them in the form of narrative representation using interviews, autobiographies, journals, letters, field notes, conversations, artifacts, family stories, or life experiences. The narrative is a preferred medium for data representation for researchers who do not want to lose the temporal quality and contextual detail of what is being studied (Fenstermacher, 1994). The narrative provides the rich contextual nature of experiences instead of just a description of experiences.

Narrative inquiry is not just an uncovering of the experience, but a study of the experience in relationship to context, location, and author. This methodology understands that any experience is nested within multiple layers of experience and context (Downey & Clandinin, 2010). Personal narratives and cultural stories are vital in teaching content and methodology (Gay, 2010). By utilizing to a narrative inquiry as a methodology, for this research study, I am able to provide a more holistic picture about the participants'

beliefs, personal narratives and whether or not quality afterschool programs attended by African American students from underserved communities can serve as a professional learning community to assist in the development of in-service teachers' culturally responsive pedagogy. Pedagogy is more than an instructional style. It is the mindset teachers have for their students.

Narrative inquiry was strongly influenced by one of the most forward thinking scholars of education, John Dewey. Dewey's philosophy of experience is paramount to understanding the possibilities of narrative inquiry. Dewey sees experience as being a combination of active and passive elements. He states that, "we do something to the thing and then it does something to us in return" (Dewey, 1916, p.139). For Dewey, experience is an interaction, both personal and social. Another criterion of experience for Dewey is continuity. "The notion that experiences grow out of other experiences, and experiences lead to further experiences" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.2). In narrative inquiry each experience is on a continuum of time that moves back and forth between personal and social in numerous different settings. Narrative inquirers work in a three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, which is derived from Dewey's view of experience (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). The three dimensional space facilitates a cyclic action that allows inquirers to travel "inward, outward, backward, forward, and situated within place" (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000 p. 49) The first dimension is interaction where relationship between personal and social is reflected upon. Then there is temporality that examines experience across time: past, present, and future. Lastly, there is the dimension

of situation, which considers experience in the context of a place or a series of places. By utilizing the three dimensions of experience developed by Dewey (interaction, temporality, and place), narrative inquiry allows stories to be constructed that represent the totality of an experience and not just the experience itself (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Researchers who engage in narrative inquiry do not live outside of the narrative space but in it, alongside, and in relation to participants (Downey & Clandinin, 2010). Narrative inquirers understand that an experience cannot be broken down into parts without losing pieces of how the experience was produced. No experience within a narrative is a singular unit, but a series of relationships to other experiences. As Narrative Inquirers seek to navigate the dimensions of the narrative there is an understanding that their own narrative is as essential to the inquiry process as the narratives of participants. The lenses of their own narrative influences how the story gets shifted, situated, and told. The main focus of the narrative inquirer is to call attention to the many different stories that lie beside, beneath, behind, and above the story that is being retold. Much like the writers of ragtime music, narrative inquirers recognize that individual parts are merely noise but when combined together the parts create memorable and melodic tunes.

The use of narrative inquiry in educational research is based on the claim that “humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially lead storied lives” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p.2). By sharing life stories, participants in narrative inquiry, provide a personal history or reconstruction of a particular experience. Narrative inquiry looks at how the story is told, what the story means, where the story is situated,

and how one story might influence others. The focus of narrative inquiry is broad enough that it encompasses the whole person and not a single event or experience; it is all about connections and more stories.

One cannot adequately examine narrative without considering the culture and identity of the individual constructing or retelling the narrative. The culture of individuals cannot be easily described. As narratives are constructed, identity and culture is revealed. It partially answers the questions: Who am I? Whose am I? Who do I want to be? Where do I want to go? How am I viewed? What's important to me? What is it to me? How does it shape my past, present, and future? What do I reveal to and for whom? Pai and associates (2006) explains,

how we teach, what we teach, how we relate to children and each other, what our goals are – these are rooted in the norms of our culture.....In a society with as much sociocultural and racial diversity as the United States, the lack of this wonderment about alternative ways often results in unequal education and social injustice. (p. 233).

As such, teaching is most effective when ecological factors, such as prior experiences, community settings, cultural backgrounds, and ethnic identities of teachers and students, are included in its implementation.

Site Selection

The location of the collective case study took place at a quality afterschool program located in a mid-north eastern state that serves African American students from underserved communities thus allowing the phenomenon to be investigated in a bounded

integrated system (Glesne, 2006). A pseudonym of, Inspiration Afterschool Program, will be used in future references to identify this afterschool program location site. Purposeful sampling strategy was used to select the Inspiration Afterschool program from which to collect the data and the in-service teacher participants. Purposeful sampling entails selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001).

Foremost, the Inspiration Afterschool Program was selected because it met the informed and identified criterion of being a high quality afterschool program. In the review of literature, I provided criterion established through documented research studies that included characteristics of high quality afterschool programs. Almost all of the studies concurred on the importance of certain elements including: (a) safety; (b) staff training; (c) relationship between staff and youth; (d) intentional, developmentally appropriate, and authentic learning; (e) strong leadership. These characteristic elements of high quality afterschool programs are listed below in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 What Makes a High Quality Afterschool Program?

Literature	Criterion	Inspiration Afterschool Program
High Quality Afterschool Programs		
A report conducted by the RAND Corporation Bodily and Beckett (2005)	a clear mission; high expectations and positive social norms; a safe and healthy environment; a supportive emotional climate; a small total enrollment; stable, trained personnel; appropriate content and pedagogy with opportunities to engage; integrated family and community partners; frequent assessment.	The Inspiration Afterschool Program (IAP) meets have consistent staff pairs at each grade level that work with the youth through community partnerships and parental engagement support. The parents and students complete a yearly assessment of the program that informs future programming.
A report commissioned by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation (Miller, 2003)	<i>* In addition to the report conducted by the RAND Corporation</i> adequate funding; appropriate space; the inclusion of youth voice; opportunity for choice in activities; staff who understand participants' cultures and can support healthy identity development; and strong management and leadership.	The IAP has a very active board of directors that assists the executive director in fund raising initiatives. They have youth council. Management and staff regularly attend local and state professional development trainings.
Beckett, Hawken, & Jackowitz (2001)	staff management practices, program management practices, and community contacts.	The IAP program has a student, staff and parent handbook.
The Education Broadcasting Corporation (2004)	community-driven, expanded learning opportunities that support developmentally appropriate cognitive, social, physical, and emotional outcomes. In addition, these programs offer a balanced program of academic support, arts and cultural enrichment, recreation, and nutrition.	IAP's parent company has been a positive force in the community for over four decades that is dedicated to improving the quality of life for children, families, and communities.
The New York State Afterschool Network (NYSAN)-10 essential elements	environment/climate; administration/organization; relationships; staffing/professional development; programming/activities; academic alignment/achievement; youth participation/engagement; parent/family/community partnerships; program sustainability/growth; measuring outcomes/ evaluation.	The IAP it is committed to nurturing the development of children by meeting their academic, social and emotional needs within a constructive,

		wholesome, and safe learning environment, which places value on making positive choices as a foundation for building a productive life.
The Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool Youth Development Network (PSAYDN)- 4 Program Quality Guiding Principles	structure and management, positive connections, safety and health, and activities.	The IAP meets these criterion as described in detail above through evidence of fulfilling their mission statement.
Effective Programs		
McLaughlin (2000) -considered positive academic outcomes positive youth development outcomes	Intentional learning environments, youth-centered, knowledge-centered, assessment centered, safe, caring communities with strong relationships providing youth with social capital through relational resources and connections.	The IAP has life-skills and mentoring classes for the males and females in which they discuss age-appropriate topics.
A report entitled, Study of Promising Afterschool Programs, conducted by Vandell et al. (2006) identified promising programs by observing the following “key process features”:	Staff and youth have supportive relationships with each other and amongst themselves; youth have wide-ranging opportunities to for academic support, recreation, art, and other enrichment activities; appropriate cognitive structured activities; and chaos, over-control.	The IAP has supportive and dedicated staff that provides small group instruction in academics, life-skills and arts & recreation.
What Counts?		
United Way of Massachusetts solicited a report studying “what counts” in afterschool programs (Miller, 2005).	Youth engagement in programs, staff engagement with youth, and communication with families were correlated with positive youth outcomes They also found that education background of staff and director, staff turnover, and communication with school personnel were linked to positive youth outcomes. Notably, they found that where a program was located (i.e. community-based versus in schools) did not influence program quality.	The IAP is located within a charter school and is part of a larger community-based afterschool program. Many of the staff are community residents and teachers from the school. Many of the youth that graduate from the program go-on to college and comeback to work at the program as interns or during the summer.

Durlak and Weissberg's approach (2007), identified four evidence-based qualities that are essential for programs to show positive academic and social outcomes.	sequenced, active, focused, and explicit	The IAP has a structured schedule, skilled assigned staff, and measureable outcomes.
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Furthermore, the Inspiration Afterschool Program was the same site location of the pilot study in 2010, as described in chapter one. The Inspiration Afterschool Program is uniquely housed within a charter school building and many of the school's teachers work in the afterschool program. The Inspiration Afterschool Program's mission states that they are committed to nurturing the development of children by meeting their academic, social and emotional needs within a constructive, wholesome and safe learning environment which places value on making positive choices as a foundation for building a productive life. Therefore, the site location provided an open and familiar surrounding to extend the dissertation research study of focusing on in-service teachers and how their narrative backgrounds and beliefs have informed their culturally responsive pedagogy of working with African-American youth from underserved communities in an afterschool setting.

In addition, The Inspiration Afterschool Program is part of a community-based organization that was established in 1968 as a recreational facility and alternative to street life for local community youth, amidst an atmosphere of social and racial tensions. A pseudonym of, Destiny Youth Development Center, will be used in future references to identify this community-based organization. The Destiny Youth Development Center was one of three organizations chosen to receive a competitive grant to be part of a three-year

cohort-pilot study. The purpose of the grant was to provide capacity building support to afterschool programs through an Afterschool Data Collection/Technical Assistance Fund. The fund supported the acquisition of hardware for data collection purposes and provided consultation on building a data collection and program evaluation system. Additionally, through this funding, financial analysis and training for the three cohort organizations was provided to enhance their abilities to link organizational strategic goals to their financial stability. These organizations were selected based on a few criteria: high quality afterschool program, engaged board, staff capacity, financial profile, existing ability to capture data, and broad outreach to youth.

Contextual setting of the afterschool program. The Destiny Youth Development Center officially incorporated in 1975 with a school-based curriculum in an afterschool setting. In 1993, a local preschool moved under the organization's umbrella, providing an affordable, educationally-based pre-school opportunity to preschoolers in that community. In 1997, the Destiny Youth Development Center played an integral part in the development of the charter school, serving grades K to 8. The Destiny Youth Development Center shares facilities with the charter school in a mutually beneficial relationship that provides savings in maintenance and operations, services such as fiscal monitoring and other overhead costs.

The Destiny Youth Development Center is a nonprofit organization and a local economic resource for its' immediate community. Of the 51 full and part time employees currently employed at the Destiny Youth Development Center, fifty percent (50%) live with the neighborhood; and thirty percent (30%) of all employees live within a three-

block radius of the organization. Nearly twenty-five percent (25%) are parents of present and former students.

Current programs & activities. From the conception in 1968, the sole purpose of the Destiny Youth Development Center has been to assist parents and caregivers with the total development of their children. Further, it attempts to assist each child in realizing his or her potential in an atmosphere that considers individual needs. Along with creating a place that is safe for children, the Destiny Youth Development Center provides a vehicle for parents to dialogue with teachers and other parents about relevant aspects of their children's total development. Today the Destiny Youth Development Center is a 4-tiered program: a private, multi-cultural nursery school, serving children ages 2.5 to 5 years; Inspiration Afterschool Program offering a research-based curriculum in math, reading and science, in addition to complementary recreational activities, social development-focused activities, and wellness activities; Inspiration Afterschool/ Summer Program offering a research-based curriculum in math, reading and science, as well as recreational activities meeting the needs of the whole child; and the most recent addition, Saturday Program offering academic support and recreational activities. The Inspiration Afterschool/ Summer Program and Saturday programs serve youth in grades K – 12, with the Saturday Program having an extension of hours to accommodate recreational activities targeted to men 18 years and older. The Destiny Youth Development Center seeks to replace negative behaviors with positive goals, through mobilizing families from the community to participate in the development of the youth.

Selection of Participants

This collective case study utilized purposeful sampling (Marshall & Rossman, 1999), to investigate the in-service teachers' culturally responsive teaching instruction supported and developed through less formal learning and teaching environments. The executive director for the Destiny Youth Development Center and the program director for the Inspiration Afterschool Program allowed the researcher access to the afterschool setting to allow for the implementation of the dissertation study to involve their afterschool program staff. The aim was to have all the in-service teachers working in the afterschool program to voluntarily consent to participate in the study with the hopes as having at least all the criterion participants. Twenty-two staff members from the Inspiration Afterschool Program were identified to be a part of the research study. Out of those twenty-two identified, only ten of those matched the criterion to be included in the study. Table 3.2 below outlines the criterion description and rationale for participant selection.

Table 3.2: Participant Criterion	
Criteria	Description and Rationale
In-service teacher working during the day in an urban classroom	The research focused on in-service teachers' culturally responsive teaching instruction supported and developed through less formal learning and teaching environments.
In-service teacher working at least 8 hours/week in the Inspiration Afterschool program	The researcher is interested in studying in-service teacher's beliefs, personal narratives, and culturally responsive teaching practices in educating African American youth attending a quality afterschool program in an underserved community.

Willingness to participate	It is important that the participant is willing to set aside the time and openness needed to be included in the study (narrative interviews and follow-up, documentation observation, questionnaire)
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The twelve staff members that did not meet the criteria were not in-service teachers teaching during the day in traditional classrooms. Some of them worked in a different profession for their day job or were retired. Others worked part-time in the afterschool program in roles of classroom assistants, floaters, class monitors, or administrative support staff. And of the ten staff members that meet the criteria, only eight teachers volunteered to be a part of the study. An effort was made to involve the four in-service teachers that participated in the pilot study conducted in 2010 as described in chapter one, which was located at the Inspiration Afterschool program. Three of the four in-service teachers still worked in the afterschool program and agreed to participate in this current study. The other in-service teacher that participated in the pilot study still worked for the charter school, but did not work at the afterschool program any longer due to family obligations. Table 3.3 below displays some demographic and descriptive information of the selected research participants. Due to the small population size of the charter school and the number of in-service teachers working in the Inspiration Afterschool program, an effort was made to summarize the descriptions as way to not reveal the identity of the study participants by not directly contributing gender, race, and role to specific participants.

Table 3.3 Description of Participants	
Description	Summary of Responses
Age Range	Three participants were between the ages of 25-30. Four participants between the ages of 31-36. One participant was in the last 40's.
Race	Four participants were African-American. Four participants were White.
Gender	Three participants were females. Five participants were males.
Years of Teaching Experience	Four participants had between 1-5 years of teaching experience. Three participants had between 6-10 years. One participant had over 10 years of teaching experience, but less 15 years.
Grade Level of Certification	One participant was certified to teach K-6 only. Two participants were certified to teach K-9. One participant was only certified to teach grades 6-8. Four participants were certified to teach K-12.
Certification Area	There was a mixture of multiple certification areas. One participant's certification area was special education. Two participants were certified in health and physical education. One participant was able to teach all subject areas (participant with the K-6 certification). Two participants were certified in social studies. Four participants were certified in English.
Location of Teaching of Day-Time Employment	Four participants were permanent teachers at the charter connected with the afterschool program. One teacher was a permanent teacher in a public school system. Two teachers were full-time substitutes in urban school districts.
Attended a Historically Black University (HBCU)	One participant obtained teaching degree from a HBCU.
Attended an Predominately White Institution (PWI)	Seven participants obtained teaching degrees from a PWI.
Highest Degree Obtained	Four participants obtained a bachelors degree. Four participants obtained a masters degree in teaching and education.
Years Teaching in Afterschool Program	Four participants had 1-3 years working in the afterschool program. Four participants had 5-9 years of working in the afterschool program.
Teach in program during the Summer	Six of the participants also have taught in afterschool program during the summer.

Procedures for Accessing Study Participants

Upon receiving approval from the Duquesne University Internal Review Board, I contacted the program director at the Inspiration Afterschool program whom I had participated in and assisted me during my pilot study two years prior. I provided an overview of my dissertation study and outlined the predetermined criteria as shown in Tables 3.2 and 3.3. The executive director for the Destiny Youth Development Center and the program director for the Inspiration Afterschool Program gave me verbal and written permission via email to conduct my research study at their afterschool program location. The afterschool program director emailed me a list of their afterschool program staff that indicated which staff were in-service teachers. The program director invited me to speak about my research study at their staff meeting the following week. The program director adjusted the time of the meeting by fifteen minutes thus, allowing me to explain the purpose of my research study to the group of in-service teacher staff members prior to the start of the regular staff meeting. I explained to the afterschool program staff that participation was entirely voluntary and would not be connected in any way to their continued employment or performance evaluations. The prospective participants were each given an informed consent form that outlined the scope of their involvement in the dissertation study. Staff members were able to ask questions about the study and sign up to indicate their willingness to participate in the study.

Initially four of the in-service staff members consented that they wanted to participate at the conclusion of the meeting. Four others gave their consent of participating in the study after I followed-up with them on at least two e-mails and two phone messages. These second four noted their initial hesitation was due to other commanding constraints of their time. After I explained that I would interview them at time and place that was most convenient to them, they agreed to participate in the study.

I contacted each of the consented afterschool program staff to schedule the interviews at a time that was convenient for them and ensured their comfort level of confidentiality. The interviews took place over a very busy two-month span during the Thanksgiving and Christmas season.

Data Collection

In case studies, researchers collect a variety and volumes of information to investigate such as, documentation, lesson plans, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observations, and physical artifacts (Yin, 2003). I conducted interviews and collected relevant program documents. The following paragraphs describe the data collection strategies.

Interviews. When interviewing participants, I sought to gain an understanding of how they speak of their work in relation to their upbringing, beliefs, and working with African American youth attending a quality afterschool program in an underserved community. In particular, how they describe practices as mirrored to tenets of culturally responsive teaching and the ecological systems theory, and how their practices go beyond the literature of this field to look at the challenges they face in supporting their diverse students. The purpose of utilizing interviews for qualitative research is to discover multiple views and multiple realities of the case (Stake, 1995). There were three main types of interviews used: formal structured interviews, and semi-structured interviews, and short questions occurring during the review of public document observations (Delamont, 2002). The interview questions were structured to elicit unique experiences and stories from the participants rather than simple yes and no answers (Stake, 1993). Thus the interview questions were designed to give narrative voice to participants. Yin (1994) discussed design as “the logic that links the data to be collected (and the conclusions to be drawn) to the initial questions of the study” (p.18). Anfara, Brown and

Mangione (2002) noted keeping in mind that research questions provide the scaffolding for the investigation and the cornerstone for the analysis of the data, researchers should form interview questions on the basis of what truly needs to be known. Table 3.4 on the following page presents the three major research questions that served as the foundation on which the subsequent interview questions were designed with initial codes.

Table 3.4: Research Questions in Relation to Interview Questions/Codes		
RESEARCH QUESTIONS	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	INITIAL CODES
From a teacher's perspective, what role, if any, do quality afterschool programs play in preparing them to effectively educate African American youth from underserved communities?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is your assigned role and tasks in the afterschool program? 2. Why do you work in this afterschool program? 3. What do you see as the afterschool program's effect on the academic success of the youth participants during their school day? 4. Please describe the professional development trainings offered to you in the afterschool program? 5. What professional development opportunities would be most helpful to you? 	Afterschool Program: Why do you work here? Afterschool Program: Role Students Grades Improve from being in afterschool program MICRO MESO MACRO EXO

What transformative processes are experienced by teachers who decide to work in an afterschool program located in an underserved community?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please describe how you handle conflicts between your content and instructional goals with your administrator's goals? 2. Please describe any new teaching strategies that you have incorporated into your school day instruction as a result of being involved in the afterschool program? 3. Do you feel that the professional development trainings are relevant to your position and help equip you better to interact with and teach the youth participants? 4. How do your professional development trainings prepare you to recognize and support the unique needs of the youth participants? 5. Are professional development opportunities shared between afterschool and the school-day? 6. Please describe the strengths and drawbacks of your philosophy of teaching that 	<p>Instructional Conflicts</p> <p>Instructional Learning</p> <p>Shared with School day</p> <p>Professional Development</p> <p>beneficial/not beneficial</p> <p>Practices in working with youth</p> <p>View of Teaching:</p> <p>Afterschool vs. traditional School</p>

	<p>contribute to afterschool programs.</p> <p>7. Please describe your view of teaching in an afterschool program versus teaching in your regular classroom?</p>	
<p>What do teachers believe is the role of teacher learning in ensuring teacher effectiveness for educating African-American youth from underserved backgrounds?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please describe your background. Where are you from? Describe the community you grew up in? 2. How would you describe your K-12 educational experience? 3. How has your race influenced your K-12 educational experience? 4. How has your gender influenced your K-12 educational experience? 5. Please describe your career path to becoming a teacher. 6. Who were the people that guided or inspired you? 7. How would you describe your teacher education program? What changes would you make? 8. How did your teacher preparation help you to work with children whose race and ethnicity 	<p>Career Path</p> <p>Changes to Teacher Preparation program</p> <p>CRTC Comprehensive</p> <p>CRTEM Emancipatory</p> <p>CRTEP Empowering</p> <p>CRTM Multidimensional</p> <p>CRTT Transformative</p> <p>CRTV Validating</p> <p>Educating African-American Children</p> <p>Experience to Help Grow professionally</p> <p>Family</p> <p>Gender Having An Influence</p> <p>Inspiration</p> <p>K-12 Schooling</p> <p>Race Having an Influence</p> <p>Role of Students Race, Class gender</p> <p>Teacher Preparation Program</p> <p>Teacher Preparation Program Beneficial</p> <p>Teaching Philosophy</p> <p>Teaching Program</p> <p>Teaches about Race</p>

	<p>differ from your own?</p> <p>9. How would you describe your philosophy of teaching? Where do you think those beliefs may have come from?</p> <p>10. Please describe an experience that has helped you grow professionally as a teacher.</p> <p>11. What qualities or practices do you think are important for working with the students in your classroom?</p> <p>12. What role does a student's culture (race, class, gender, etc.) play in their ability to be successful in school?</p> <p>13. What teaching skills are critical to helping African-American students? Why?</p>	
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McMillan and Schumacher (2006) indicated that establishing trust, being genuine, maintaining eye contact and conveying through phrasing, cadence, and voice tone that the researcher hears and connects with the person elicit more valid data than a rigid approach. Before beginning the interview, I did a few things to create a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere. I reminded the participants the purpose of the study and ensured confidentiality. The participants were given the opportunity to select their own pseudonym. I reviewed with the participants the flow of the questions (family life,

personal K-12 experience, path to becoming a teaching, education African-American youth, and working in an afterschool program). Also prior to the interview, I engaged in an informal conversation with the participants to increase their comfort level.

Face to face interviews were conducted with the eight consented research participants at an agreed upon time between the researcher and participant. The interviews were conducted at a setting of the participants' choice. The settings included the participant's office at the school, workspace, and various other classrooms within the school (sewing room, music room, behavior support room) that allowed quietness and confidentiality.

The interviews were designed to last one hour to one and a half hour long. The length of the interviews' time lasted between twenty-eight minutes and one hour and twenty minutes. To capture and give voice to my narrative story of being a certified teacher that worked for an afterschool program that served African American youth from underserved communities, a doctoral student that has experience in qualitative interviewing interviewed me.

I conducted and recorded all interviews using a digital audio recorder. The interview protocol was followed, and the interview was recorded, however; deviations from the interview schedule were permitted to probe and explore issues raised by the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). If I probed to get participants to elaborate on their responses, sensitivity prevailed to ensure no harm was done and that comfort level remained (Corbin & Morse, 2003).

During each interview, field notes were taken to describe the researcher's insights and reflections of the interview process (Marshall & Rossman, 1997). I took non-judgmental field notes on any nonverbal communication of each participant during the interview session. The field notes collected during the research study also recorded the

dates, times, settings, and brief description of the impressions or quality of data conveyed in the interview. This space allowed for my comments including thoughts, feelings, or questions about the interview⁴. The digital audio interviews were transcribed verbatim by a transcription service for use in the data analysis process. McMillan and Schumacher (2006) describe that recording interviews ensures the completeness of the verbal interaction and provides material for reliability checks. I spent 35-45 hours reviewing the nine transcriptions by listening to the recording and correcting the transcription for accuracy. The transcripts were sent to the participants once the researcher removed all identifiable information. The participants were able to review the transcription to determine its representation of the interview. As I re-listened and reread the interview transcriptions, special attention was made to initial insights and written comment notes were recorded. Each digital audio interview was maintained in an electronic database and labeled with the pseudonym chosen by the participant. Digital recordings and transcripts were protected with a code known only to the researcher.

Public document observation. Qualitative researchers depend upon a variety of methods for gathering data because it counteracts threats to validity and contributes to the trustworthiness of the data. Taking a multi-method approach to data collection is called triangulation and it is one of the most popular validation strategies that qualitative researchers employ (Shank, 2006). Data collection and analysis was conducted simultaneously in order to utilize the obtained data to inform the collection and interpretation of additional data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, in addition to in-depth interviews, the data collection also consisted of document reviews of relevant afterschool program documents including afterschool block schedule of activities, parent handbook, staff handbook, program's mission and pamphlets, professional development

⁴ See Appendix C for a sample of the memo form

training topics and materials, and the afterschool newsletter. According to Cresswell (2003), the advantages of document reviews are to enable the researcher language and words of the participants and an unobtrusive way to collecting data.

Data Analysis

A weakness of many qualitative research studies, according to Hasselgren (1993), is the failure by researchers to illuminate thoroughly how they derive the outcomes of analysis. He argues that in most cases: researchers "quite simply establish that they transcribe their interviews, read and re-read these thoroughly and then state that in this process categories of description, and so also the conceptions, simply 'emerge' " (p.71). The data analysis procedures outlined in this section ensures thoroughness in describing how I derived the outcomes of analysis for this study through theme development process in attempt to make this dissertation study as public and replicable as possible (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002).

Marshall and Rossman (1999) describe data analysis as "...a messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative and fascinating process. It is the search among data to identify content for ethnographies and for participants 'truths' (p. 150)." Analysis for this study involved organizing and interpreting over 600 pages of data gathered from interviews, documents, and informal observations. In qualitative data analysis, it is critical for researchers to be able to organize, manage, and retrieve the most meaningful bits of data (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). In an effort to assist me with organizing the collected data, I utilized Microsoft Word for Mac 2011 and ATLAS.ti 7.

Microsoft Word was used during the first phase of coding, initial coding was used (Saldana, 2009) to reduce the data (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The initial codes were derived from the interview protocol questions⁵ as related to

⁵ See Appendix D for the interview protocol questions

categories of family life, personal K-12 experience, path to becoming a teaching, practices in educating African-American youth, and working in an afterschool program. The initial codes were also derived from the theoretical frames of culturally responsive pedagogy (Erickson, 1987, Gay, 2000, 2002) and ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This process enabled me to see and determine preliminary patterns and emerging themes in the data. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001), this strategy is considered interim analysis. Once the interim analysis was completed for all of the transcribed interviews, the Microsoft Word documents were uploaded to ATLAS.ti 7 as primary documents for further data analysis and document management.

Utilizing ATLAS.ti 7: A Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis System (CAQDAS). The Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis System (CAQDAS) included the use of ATLAS.ti 7 as the primary code-and-retrieve program software tool to manage and analyze the large amounts of data in this qualitative study. In addition to managing text, ATLAS.ti also allows for audio (recordings) and visual (photographs) information material to be uploaded and incorporated as data documents to be analyzed. In addition to the transcribed Microsoft Word interviews, I uploaded relevant documents from Inspiration Afterschool program that included afterschool block schedule of activities, parent handbook, staff handbook, program's mission and pamphlets, professional development training topics and materials, and the afterschool newsletter for data analysis. According to Muhr (1991), the goal of CAQDAS tools are to assist the human interpreter, but warns that the automatic interpretation of text cannot succeed in grasping the complexity, lack of explicitness, and the contextuality of everyday knowledge, thus CAQDAS can not replace human knowledge and understanding interpreting the data.

Coding with ATLAS.ti. “Coding is the pivotal link between collecting data and developing an emergent theory to explain these data. Through coding, you define what is happening in the data and begin to grapple with what it means” (Charmaz, 2006, p.46). The second and third phases of coding occurred within the ATLAS.ti 7, in which data were further reduced to identify reoccurring and emerging themes that highlighted the theoretical frames present within the participants’ personal narratives. I used Maxwell’s approach to analyzing the data by coding my transcribed interviews using the qualitative software, ATLAS.ti 7 to identify convergence in the data (Patton 1990). See Figure 3.2 below.

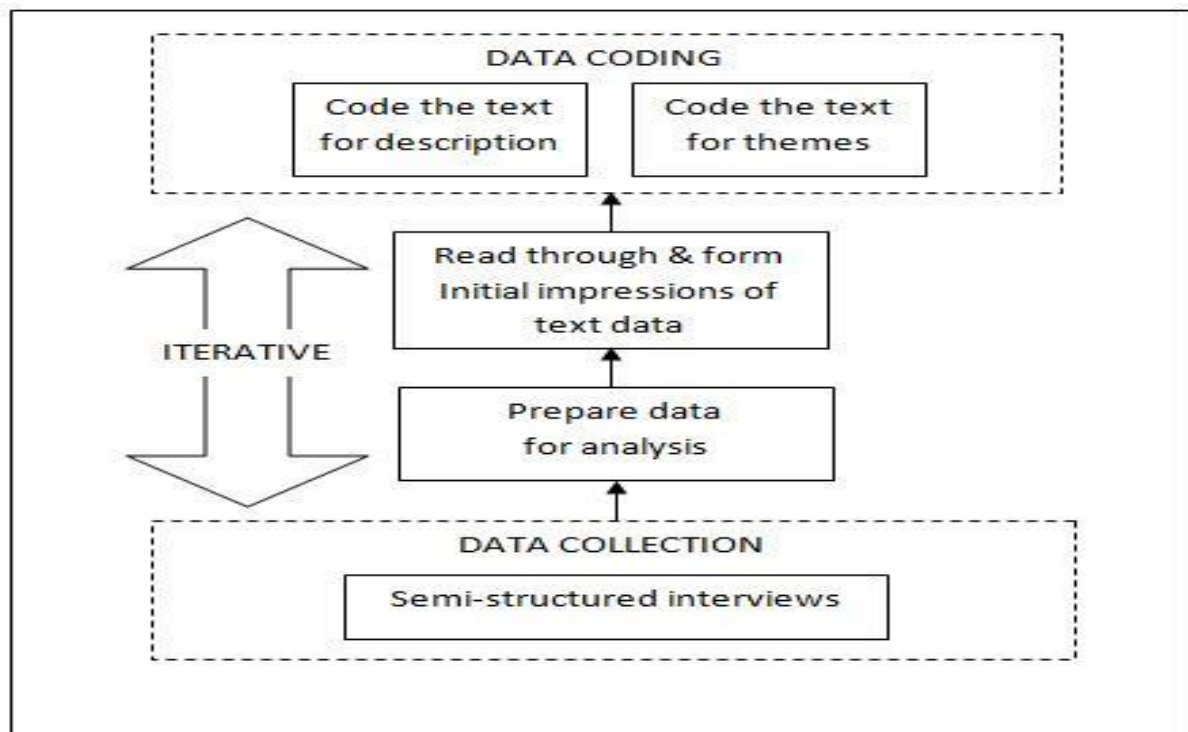


Figure 3.2 Iterative Data Coding Process
Source: Cresswell’s (2008) qualitative process of data analysis

Open coding is the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). As labels were created for the codes, I reflected on key concepts that emerged from the review of related literature where appropriate (See Appendix K). As described by Miller (2008), although the reflexive nature of qualitative research accepts that the position of the researcher does

influence the themes that surface, this thorough open coding process will allow themes that are truly reflective of the participants' responses to emerge from the data. The coding function in ATLAS.ti 7 includes highlighting the transcribed text to be coded within the primary document and labeling the text utilizing open coding, code in vivo, or code by list. I utilized the "code by list" function of ATLAS.ti 7 to code my nine primary documents to bring to life reoccurring themes across the participant cases that began to evolve. Figure 3.3 illustrates an excerpt of a coded interview transcript. Table 3.5 details the steps followed in using ATLAS.ti 7 for coding my data.

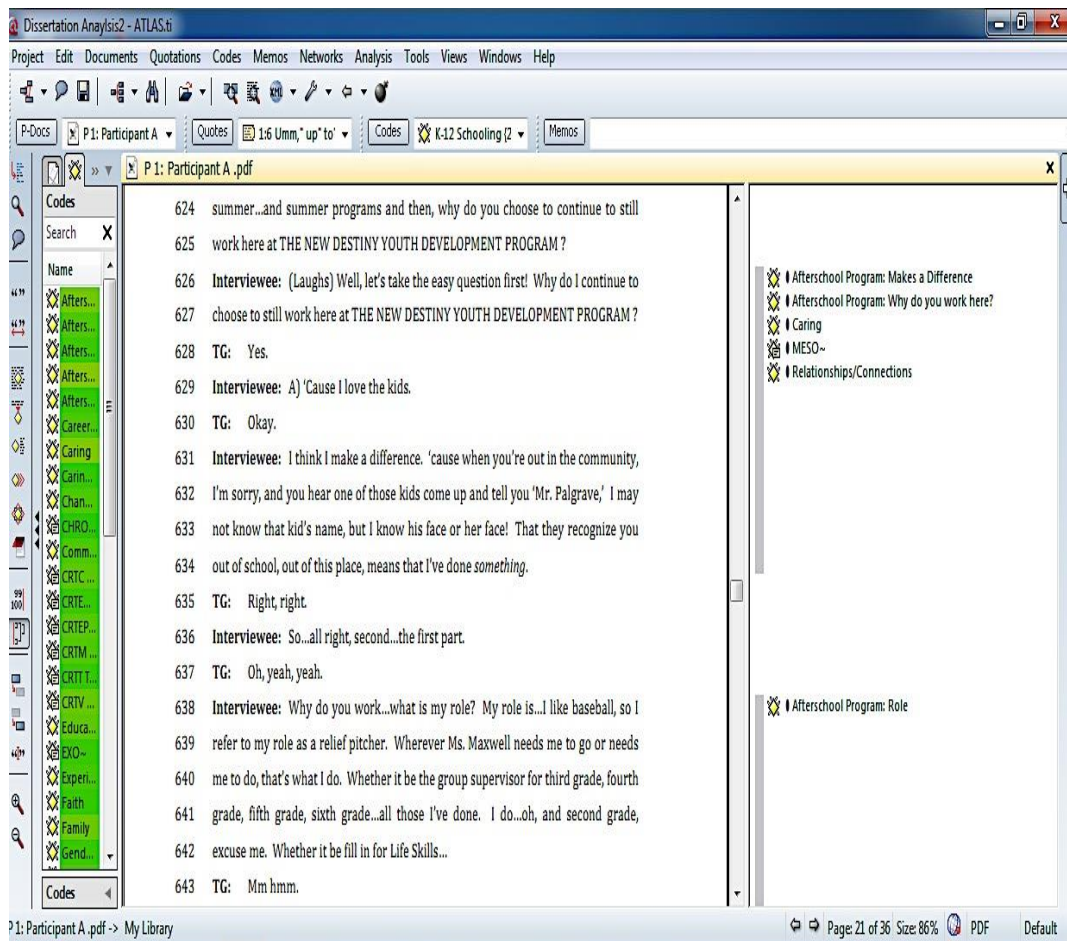


Figure 3.3 Screenshot of a coded transcript within ATLAS.ti

Table 3.5: Researcher's Use of Coding in ATLAS.ti 7	
Steps	Research Actions
Interim Analysis (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001)	I reread the 9 interview transcriptions and re-listened to the interview audio files. This process enabled me to see, hear and determine preliminary patterns and emerging themes in the data used to help with coding in ATLAS.ti 7
ATLAS.ti 7 begins with the user creating a research project—called a Hermeneutic Unit (HU). The HU serves as an electronic container/file for all collected or created data related to the research project.	I created a hermeneutic unit and entitled it Dissertation Analysis
Selection of documents to be analyzed	In addition to the transcribed Microsoft Word interviews, I uploaded relevant documents from Inspiration Afterschool program that included afterschool block schedule of activities, parent handbook, staff handbook, program's mission and pamphlets, professional development training topics and materials, and the afterschool newsletter to the Dissertation Analysis HU
Open Coding	The initial codes were derived from the research questions, interview protocol questions and from the theoretical frames of culturally responsive pedagogy (Erickson, 1987, Gay, 2000, 2002) and Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).
Axial Coding	I utilized selective codes relating to existing and newly created codes that emerged from the data

Code mapping. Creswell (2007) stated:

Data analysis in qualitative research consist of preparing and organizing the data (i.e., text data as in transcripts, or image data as in photographs) for analysis then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing codes, and finally representing the data in figures, tables, or a discussion. (p. 148)

Code mapping was utilized to bring meaning, structure, and order to the data (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002). The purpose of Table 3.6 is to present the larger, consolidated picture that emerged from the “process of bringing order, structure, and interpretation to the mass of collected data” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). This theme generation process has three iterations of data analysis. As data were being coded (first iteration), the responses were compared within categories and between categories (second iteration). Glaser and Strauss (1967) refer to this as constant comparative analysis. The process led to the generation of the theoretical properties of the categories and was intended to generate the findings in this study. The codes, categories, and themes are presented in alignment with the three major research questions that guided this study. The first iteration of analysis consists of the initial codes that were assigned to the personal narratives of the eight in-service teachers and myself included in this study. Again, the initial codes were derived from the research questions, interview protocol questions and from the theoretical frames of culturally responsive pedagogy and ecological systems theory. Continuously reflecting on the theoretical frameworks, research questions, literature review, and ATLAS.ti 7 visual aids, categories were generated and presented in the second iteration in the code map. These axial codes utilized selective codes relating to existing and newly created codes that emerged from the data. The third iteration of the code map presents the three major themes that emerged from the study.

Table 3.6: Code Mapping: Three Iterations of Analysis		
Code Mapping: Three Iterations of Analysis (to be read from the bottom up)		
RESEARCH QUESTIONS		
RQ#1: From a teacher's perspective, what role, if any, do quality afterschool programs play in preparing them to effectively educate African American youth from underserved communities?	RQ#2: What transformative processes are experienced by teachers who decide to work in an afterschool program located in an underserved community?	RQ#3: What do teachers believe is the role of teacher learning in ensuring teacher effectiveness for educating African-American youth from underserved backgrounds?
THIRD ITERATION: APPLICATION TO DATA SET		
Afterschool programs makes a difference: Provides extra learning opportunities, mentorship, and an avenue to grapple with understanding youth's community and family origins.	Breaking Barriers: Building Relationships with students through strategies learned via personal interaction and professional development trainings	Sharing personal and professional career path to becoming a teacher: Lessons learned/ What would be done differently
SECOND ITERATION: EMERGING THEMES		
Student's Community/Parents Positive Connections/Exposure Time on Task Mentorship	Afterschool Teaching is beneficial/not beneficial Relationships/Connections Caring Structured/ Not Structured Support/Lack of Support from Administrator(s)	Passion Teacher's Story View of K-12 Teachers Exposure through TP program Personal Race/Gender Upbringing/ Life of Teacher Faith Community Defined
FIRST ITERATION: INITIAL CODES, SURFACE CONTENT ANALYSIS		
Afterschool Program: Why do you work here? Afterschool Program: Role Students Grades Improve from Being in afterschool program MICRO MESO MACRO	Instructional Conflicts Instructional Learning Shared with School day Professional Development beneficial/not beneficial Practices in working with youth View of Teaching: Afterschool vs. traditional	Career Path Changes to Teacher Preparation program CRTC Comprehensive CRTEM Emancipatory CRTEP Empowering CRTM Multidimensional CRTT Transformative CRTV Validating

EXO CHRONO	School	Educating African-American children Experience to Help Grow professionally Family Gender Having An Influence Inspiration K-12 Schooling Race Having an Influence Role of Students Race, Class gender Teacher Preparation Program Teacher Preparation Program beneficial Teaching Philosophy Teaching Program Teaches about race
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Trustworthiness of the Data

Qualitative researchers depend upon a variety of methods for gathering information because it strengthens the validity and contributes to the trustworthiness of the data collection and its process. According to Creswell (2007), triangulation provides in-depth descriptions that establish credibility and help to identify themes and patterns. Stake (2010) stated, “The reason for triangulating our data is in order to increase confidence that we have correctly interpreted how things work” (p. 37). Several efforts were made in this study to ensure its trustworthiness. I triangulated the literature review, recordings of the semi-structured interviews, and themes derived from the interviews.

Following data collection, individual reciprocity interviews conducted via face-to-face, email, and phone were conducted with the participants (Lather, 1991) in which, the participants naturally commented on their interview transcripts, as well as my emerging interpretations. Member checking of the recorded and transcribed interviews were used to triangulate the data and my interpretations of the data to ensure authenticity of the data (Merriam, 1998). Providing access to the decisions that are made in the

process of conducting qualitative research is part of responding to the question of whether or not the findings are sufficiently credible and trustworthy (Borman, 1995). Therefore, to maximize the trustworthiness of the data, I maintained optimal transparency by documenting and disclosing the entire research study process to the study participants.

Ethical Considerations

Marshall and Rossman (1999) deem it important to consider ethical issues during the entire research project. The study participants were all employed with the Inspiration Afterschool program located within the charter school building. Due to this smaller and confined setting, it was essential to ensure the participants were not identified through direct descriptive analysis. Pseudonyms suggested by the study participants were used to identify and reference them in coding and filed documents. A pseudonym was also given to position titles, people, schools (K-12 and Colleges), and geographic locations that the participants mentioned during the interviews and documents. Thus, all identifiable information was removed from the transcribed interviews. These steps in ethical consideration were taken as to protect and not reveal the identity of the study participants.

In order to maintain an ethical study, all guidance provided by the Duquesne University Internal Review Board was followed through verbal and written summary of interview participant's rights, benefits, and costs. All of the research participants signed informed consent documents. The participants were reminded that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed why a qualitative collective case study approach to research for this study of looking at teacher's beliefs, personal narratives, and culturally responsive teaching practices in educating African American youth attending a quality afterschool program in an underserved community is most viable. In an attempt to

remain transparent and enhance reflexivity, this chapter begins with an overview of my researcher's positionality lens. Second, I explained narrative inquiry as my methodological approach. Because of its focus on experience and the qualities of life and education, narrative is situated in a matrix of qualitative research (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Third, I described the criterion for the site location and participants as purposeful sampling related to the pilot study that I conducted in 2010. Further, I described how I used Maxwell's approach to analyzing the data by coding my transcribed interviews using the qualitative software, ATLAS.ti. Then, I specified the several efforts made in this study to ensure its trustworthiness, including recording the interviews, taking accurate field notes, and reviewing transcribed data with the study's participants. Finally, I described the ethical considerations of the research study.

The results of the research will be presented in greater detail in Chapter 4. I will share the three themes that emerged as a result of analyzing the data collected and my interpretations of the data.

Chapter Four: Findings

Introduction

The primary focus of this research study is on in-service teachers' culturally responsive teaching instruction supported and developed through less formal learning and teaching environments. Specifically, I looked at teacher's beliefs, personal narratives, and culturally responsive teaching practices in educating African American youth attending a quality afterschool program in an underserved community. Furthermore, this work investigated whether or not quality afterschool programs attended by African American students from underserved communities can serve as a professional learning community to assist in the development of in-service teachers' culturally responsive pedagogy.

In order to focus on the classroom teachers' beliefs and personal narratives as they made meaning of their lived experiences and working in a less formal educational setting with African American youth from underserved communities, I used culturally responsive pedagogy (Erickson, 1987, Gay, 2000, 2002) and Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) as my theoretical frameworks. I believe these theories intersect when looking at the problem from a school-family-community perspective. The three research questions that guided this study are:

- 1). From a teacher's perspective, what role, if any, do quality afterschool programs play in preparing them to effectively educate African American youth from underserved communities?
- 2). What transformative processes are experienced by teachers who decide to work in an afterschool program located in an underserved community?
- 3). What do teachers believe is the role of teacher learning in ensuring teacher effectiveness for educating African-American youth from underserved backgrounds?

This chapter presents the findings of the analyzed data that was collected

throughout the duration of the research process. The documents that were reviewed and analyzed included the following: interview transcripts, observational field notes, and relevant program documents. The first section explains the steps utilized to describe the data and includes a capacity building framework that was used to answer the research questions. As themes emerged as a result of a cross-case analysis, they were organized in alignment with the major research question it answers. The second section reviews the characteristics of the contextual case site location and participant descriptions. The third section will address the first research question by describing what role, if any, quality afterschool programs play in preparing them to effectively educate African American youth from underserved communities. The fourth section will address the second research question by discussing the transformative processes experienced by teachers who decide to work in an afterschool program located in an underserved community. The fifth section will address the third research question by illustrating what teachers believe is the role of teacher learning in ensuring teacher effectiveness for educating African-American youth from underserved backgrounds. A chapter summary concludes chapter 4.

Interim Analysis

Data was analyzed through interim analysis and layered coding. Because a transcription service was used to transcribe the recoded interviews, it was important for me to reread the interview transcripts and re-listen to the audio interview recording to increase my familiarity of the data. This interim analysis (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001) allowed for cleaning of the data and surface content analysis to identify codes that appeared within the data. Once the interim analysis was completed for all of the transcribed interviews, the second and third phases of coding occurred within the ATLAS.ti 7, in which data were further reduced to identify reoccurring and emerging themes that highlighted the theoretical frames present within the participants' personal

narratives. I used Maxwell's approach to analyzing the data by coding my transcribed interviews to identify convergence in the data (Patton 1990). The interview data were then utilized to answer the research questions based on the participants in the research study.

Capacity building framework. A capacity building framework was utilized to organize how the data would be aligned for analysis. The research questions, method to answer those questions, the source to answer the questions and the connection to the theoretical framework was first considered in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 A Capacity Building Framework for Answering Research Questions			
Research Questions	Methodology	Source (Participants)	Connection to Theoretical Framework
1. From a teacher's perspective, what role, if any, do quality afterschool programs play in preparing them to effectively educate African American youth from underserved communities?	Conduct interviews based on protocol, field note observations	In-service Teachers	Review the perspective; Understanding the context of the case; Culturally responsive pedagogy (Erickson, 1987, Gay, 2000, 2002) and Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979); Views of school-family-community-partnerships.
2. What transformative processes are experienced by teachers who decide to work in an afterschool program located in an underserved community?	Conduct interviews based on protocol, document analysis	In-service Teachers	Review of processes and experiences; Understanding the context of the case, Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

3. What do teachers believe is the role of teacher learning in ensuring teacher effectiveness for educating African-American youth from underserved backgrounds?	Conduct interviews based on protocol, document analysis; field note observations	In-service Teachers	Understanding the context of the case; Review of professional development and interaction experiences; Culturally responsive pedagogy (Erickson, 1987, Gay, 2000, 2002) and Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979); Views of school-family-community-partnerships.
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Discussion of Research Questions

As noted in Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002, Conostas (1992) wrote.

“Since we are to committed to opening the private lives of participants to the public; it is ironic that our methods of data collection and analysis often remain private and unavailable for public inspection” (p.254).

The above quote is supported by additional researchers, including Guba (1981) who wrote, “while practitioners of naturalistic approaches have been reasonably introspective about what they do, they have not made systematic efforts to codify the safeguards that they intuitively build into inquires” (p.76). Hence, this analysis is based upon the assertion that good naturalistic inquiry shows the hand and opens the mind of the investigator to his or her reader.

Van Maanen (1998) also noted that researchers must translate what has been learned into a body of textual work that communicates these understandings to the reader. He referred to this process as telling the ‘tale of the field.’ The purpose of this process is

to present the reader with the stories identified throughout the analytical process, the salient themes, recurring language, and patterns of beliefs, linking people and settings together (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002). This section will discuss themes and findings that emerged from the data analysis.

Research Question #1:

The first research question asks, “From a teacher’s perspective, what role, if any, do quality afterschool programs play in preparing them to effectively educate African American youth from underserved communities?” Five interview protocol questions that related to categories of working in an afterschool program and professional development opportunities offered through the afterschool program were designed to elicit responses to answer research question one. Through interview analysis, open coding, and axial coding three iterations of codes were generated to hone in on the emerging patterns and themes.

The first iteration of codes, derived from the theoretical frames of culturally responsive pedagogy and ecological systems theory, included:

- Afterschool Program: Role/ Why do you work here?,
- Students Grades Improve from Being in afterschool program, and
- MICRO, MESO, MACRO, EXO, CHRONO

The second iteration of codes included:

- Student’s Community/Parents
- Positive Connections/Exposure
- Time on Task, and Mentorship

The final emerging theme for research question one is: Afterschool programs make a difference: Provides extra learning opportunities, mentorship, and an avenue to grapple with understanding youth’s community and family origin.

Roles and Responsibilities. The in-service teacher participants had various assigned roles and reasons for working in the Inspiration Afterschool program. Some participants quoted their role as being a lead teacher, a tutor, a mentor, and/or an afterschool recreational assistant. The reasons the participants gave for working in the afterschool ranged from simply needing extra money, to wanting to connect with the students in a different setting, and to wanting to see the students excel. One participant noted:

I love the kids. I think I make a difference. When you're out in the community and you hear one of those kids come up and say 'Mr. Palgrave! The fact that they recognize you out of school means that I've done *something*.

(Teacher Participant A)

The afterschool program director stated that a survey completed by the parents of the students that attend the program indicated that one of the top reasons for sending their child(ren) to the afterschool program was to ensure that their child receives homework assistance in completing their assignments. Also, many of the participants discussed that homework completion was one of the main emphasis and targeted goals of the Inspiration Afterschool program. One teacher described her involvement in the afterschool program as being a liaison between the school day and the afterschool program to assist the students in completing their homework.

My role, specifically, is to help with homework; that's it. I'm there to make sure that their homework is done and to offer any assistance in the homework. So I am the to that link between the charter school and afterschool in terms of getting things done.

(Teacher Participant G)

Two teachers noted that their immediate motive for working in the afterschool program was to gain employment and to earn some extra money; however, their desire to continue working in the program shifted after they developed relationships with the youth. One teacher developed an interest in engaging with the students and getting to know them on

a personal level.

Well, I said I would like some extra money, why not?' I thought it would be easy to do, because I can get some *grading* done while the kids are working on their homework, and we can have *fun*, and we can *talk*, and I can get to *know them* on a different level. I just thought that that would be something positive on all aspects.

(Teacher Participant G)

Another teacher noted that he originally sought employment in the afterschool program because he needed job to make ends meets. But, after nine years of continued employments he expressed that being from the community instilled a sense of pride and responsibility to his continued desire in working in the afterschool.

He commented:

I'm from the neighborhood, so a lot of the kids that go here, I know their parents, so it's like...I'm doing my *part* as far as helping *raise* them. Even the short time they're with me, I'm trying to *influence* them and steer them in the right direction while they're in my presence, so I just feel like I'm doing *my part*.

(Teacher Participant F)

Professional Development Relevance. Overall, the participants had mixed feelings about the quality, appropriate content levels, and topics of the professional development trainings offered at the Inspiration Afterschool Program. Many of the favorable responses reflected on the trainings that introduced new creative ideas as a way to enhance and supplement some of the curriculum shortcomings experienced during the school day. One teacher remarked:

We have had some great afterschool lessons on games that can be played after school that we're incorporating after school, but we don't always get a chance to implement it because of the schedule we keep. We try to offer art, gym, computers, sewing, and cooking to try to create a roundabout experience for these kids so they get more exposure to music and drama. As those cuts happened in education, the less exposure they get to the arts and other aspects that are out there.

(Teacher Participant A)

Another teacher reflected on the relevancy of the professional development topics:

Yeah, there *are* relevant topics ...just being able to work with people in other communities and other cultures, so it *is* all relevant...everything that they're telling us, I've been interested in, which is a lot because I know that its relevant information.

(Teacher Participant D)

This quote provides a prime example of how professional development trainings offered through working in afterschool programs can serve as a learning community for in-service teachers. The teachers were exposed to culturally relevant teaching strategies to help them relate to African American youth from underserved communities. According to Gay, 2000; Martin and Van Gunten, 20002, engaging in culturally responsive pedagogy requires that teachers understand the views and learning preferences children may bring to school and how students communicate in their communities.

In being culturally responsive, the afterschool teachers and staff learned about working with parents, understanding the community of the served youth, and the importance of collaborating and sharing resources with each other. As noted by one teacher:

It's all about classroom management, behavior management, all sorts of interesting topics, one was "Understanding Your Community". So there has been all kind of stuff that really opened my eyes up. We were doing all this group work together, *collaborating* with one another about some really good ideas on how to kind of get the *parents* involved.

(Teacher Participant E)

The program director of the Inspiration Afterschool Program worked with training development consultants to customize the curriculum to fit the unique needs of their youth population. Geneva Gay (2000) defines culturally relevant pedagogy as "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them" (p. 29).

Professional Development Concerns. While many of the teachers expressed that the professional development trainings offered were beneficial, other teachers cited the need for change in the range of variety and scaffolding levels of training topics. These comments were made by the participants whom had the most seniority working at the afterschool program and mostly referred to the state mandated certification trainings. Since the Inspiration Afterschool Program is a program within the Destiny Youth Development Program, it must follow the state requirement rating standards of Essence STARS to ensure a high quality standard rating. Essence STARS is an initiative of the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) to improve, support, and recognize the continuous quality improvement efforts of early learning programs in the state.

The Essence STARS Performance Standards are grouped into four levels and provide the foundation for the program. Each level builds on the previous level and utilizes research-based best practices to promote quality early learning environments and positive child outcomes. The standards address staff qualifications and professional development, the early learning program, partnerships with family and community, and leadership and management. The conflict is that the state does not recognize the difference in age range and unique program offerings within Destiny Youth Development, which has a separate program that serves ages 2 ½ to 5 years old. The Essence STARS program is intended for early learning pre-school age children and requires that all staff in an organization be trained in certain content areas. It took a while for the state administrators to recognize and account for the age variances and that different staff are employed to serve in specific programs. As a result the staff in the Inspiration Afterschool program were mandated to complete training modules that did not pertain to the age range of the youth they were working with. One teacher as

summed up this frustration:

Yes, with Essence STARS, they had this training that we were all appalled with because it was all pre-school. It was all about changing diapers and all the ones they had online were not for us (POUNDS FOR EMPHASIS). We had to sit through them, answer the questions, and complete the certification. Eventually, the state's administrator of Essence STARS and The Destiny Youth Development Program came up with a compromise on how we're going to go in the future.

(Teacher Participant A)

Translation to Academic Success. Beckett (2009) claims that studies of out-of-school time programs tend to examine combined effects of a variety of practices and procedures on student achievement, making it difficult to determine the specific practices contributing to achievement gains. However, all the participants thought the afterschool program had an effect on the academic success of the youth participants. Some participants observed that students who regularly attended the afterschool program had greater academic success during the school day. One teacher noted:

Yes, definitely. One thing I noticed is that all the kids who stay afterschool and worked with me, and my co-worker, and got their homework done everyday, those kids all got awards and made High Honor Roll, for the most part, versus the kids who didn't stay after school. I noticed a large disparity between the two groups. I think getting that homework help is *big*, because we're hear in the school still; we have access to the manuals while we're helping them with the homework, and I think that's different for parents, who may have not been in school for a large number of years, who don't remember all the techniques, and there's *new* techniques now that are being taught.

(Teacher Participant F)

With an increasing focus on school accountability and student performance, afterschool programs can play a meaningful role in improving academic achievement and closing the gap between low and high performing students (Becket, et al, 2009). Another teacher claimed:

Yeah, it says "affect on the academic success" and I think it *does* make a difference. I think that the teachers would probably say that they're *more* prepared for class than kids who *don't* attend the afterschool program. It does make a difference in just having that extra support. If they don't understand

something that they work on in class, they're gonna have an adult that's gonna help them out with it in afterschool.

(Teacher Participant G)

Because this was a sentiment expressed by 100 percent of the teachers participating another quote is provided to express the strong connections between academic increase of youth involved in the afterschool program. The teacher explained:

I think it helps tremendously. I have kids come in to the gym all the time that *aren't* allowed to participate until they do their homework, and that's things that you wouldn't see if they weren't here. It's almost like...mm, hmm, it's like a *reward* once they finish their work, that they can come play.

(Teacher Participant C)

The participants also recognized that life-skills sessions and extra learning time in a structured and relaxed environment provided an outlet for the students to express some concerns and worries and to simply get some things off their chest. This opportunity allowed the youth to vent, gain some coping skills through the life-skills classes, and then refocus on school, which contributed to their academic success. Many of the participants credited the Inspiration Afterschool program in helping them see and connect with the students' in their community surrounding. One teacher shared an experience of her third grade teacher coming to support her at a track meet. She stated this experience encouraged and motivated her to do better in school, in particular in that teacher's class, because she showed an interest in her as person. This experience motivates the participant to intentionally seek opportunities like working in the afterschool program for her to make personal connections with her students and show them that she cares:

I think in the afterschool program, you're able to connect with the kids on a different level, like, it's not all about the 1,2,3s/ABCs, but you're able to see the child and how they interact with you and students *outside* of the classroom, and... I think that's important because students *see* that 'Oh wow, this person cares about *me*. So I think the difference would be just having students kind of be in a more relaxed environment and having them share with you what may be on their heart and mind at the time. In the classroom, it's hard to do that with, um, a limited amount of time and so many students. I think having a small group, like

we have the in the afterschool program you're able to do one-on-one's and group discussions that are really effective.

(Teacher Participant B)

Another participant reiterated the connection between participation in the afterschool and in attending life skills classes with the academic success because of the relationships that are formed.

I think that the afterschool program...it helps because you can see the kids in a little bit more of a *relaxed* environment, and they can see you in a little bit more *relaxed* environment, and you can get to know them...it just gives you more opportunities to get to know them as *individuals*...

(Teacher Participant D)

Conclusion

In conclusion for research question one, "From a teacher's perspective, what role, if any, do quality afterschool programs play in preparing them to effectively educate African American youth from underserved communities?" The teachers' narratives illustrate key factors such as learning from the professional development trainings that focus on the importance of culturally relevant curriculum, collaboration amongst teachers, and how to engage parents in partnership with their child's education. The teachers also noted that working in the afterschool program gave them the opportunity to connect with the students in their communities through a relaxed environment that allowed extra learning support time while building caring relationships that carried over to the classroom during the school day.

These examples lead to the theme that emerged for research question one: Afterschool programs make a difference: Provides extra learning opportunities, mentorship, and an avenue to grapple with understanding youth's community and family origin.

Research Question #2:

The second research question asks, “What transformative processes are experienced by teachers who decide to work in an afterschool program located in an underserved community?” Seven interview protocol questions focused on incorporating teaching strategies learned from professional development trainings in afterschool and the intersection of teachers’ teaching philosophy in educating African American youth were designed to elicit responses to answer research question two. Through interview analysis, open coding, and axial coding three iterations of codes were generated to hone in on the emerging patterns and themes.

Some of the first iteration of codes, derived from the theoretical frames of culturally responsive pedagogy and ecological systems theory, included:

- Instructional learning shared with school day
- Practices of working with youth
- Instructional conflicts

The second iteration of codes included:

- Afterschool teaching beneficial (not)
- Support/lack of support from administrators
- Relationships/connections

The final emerging theme for research question two is: **Breaking Barriers: Building Relationships** with students through strategies learned via personal interaction and professional development trainings.

Instructional Differences. The in-service teacher participants shared insights about their view of working and teaching in an afterschool program versus teaching during the traditional school day. Many of them made reference to the structural content difference of working in each noting that because of the relaxed atmosphere setting in the

afterschool program, they did not feel as though they were teaching. The teacher participants indicated that they provide tutoring assistance to students rather than teaching or re-teaching a concept. One teacher participant remarked:

Yeah, I mean, I don't feel like I'm *teaching* in the afterschool program. I think...if anything, it's more like *tutoring*. The students will say, "I need help with this problem" or "Can you look over this;" So it's more of a 'Come to me if you need help' or 'Let me check over what you already had done from earlier in school.

(Teacher Participant G)

Another teacher participant reiterated that teachers are not planning lessons or instructing students like they do during the school day. He explained:

It's a lot more one-on-one time with the students in afterschool...um, and it's a lot more, maybe more focused on *individualized attention* than during the school day.

(Teacher Participant D)

Given more time or individual attention to work on classwork provides students an extended opportunity to learn and gain a better understanding of concepts in a non-threatening way. This additional undivided instructional attention has proven to be beneficial to students in grasping concepts, especially for students from underserved communities. A study from Beckett, et al. (2009) shows that afterschool programs offer an opportunity to supplement learning from the school day and provide targeted assistance to students whose needs extend beyond what they can receive in the classroom.

Relationship Building. In addition to acknowledging teaching instructional style differences in working afterschool versus working during the school day, several teachers described how teaching in the afterschool program allowed them to develop better relationships with their students and their parents. One teacher participant noted that she transferred her relaxed personality developed by working in the afterschool program into her classroom during the day because she saw how students opened up and responded once they saw that she was a *human being*.

I think when it comes to building relationships in the relaxing afterschool program environment by being able to draw my teen girls in by joking and laughing, um... that is something that I take into the classroom. But I think just taking that...that more *relaxed* personality into the classroom and just having students see that you're *human* and that you care about them and want to be here, and you're here for *them*....that's what I've taken from the afterschool program to the classroom.

(Teacher Participant B)

Another teacher participant confirmed this same sentiment. She affirmed:

I have been able to talk to my students a little bit different during the school day because of the relationship that we built in the afterschool program. So that's been a positive, and that is something that is shared back and forth from the school day and the afterschool.

(Teacher Participant G)

Teacher Participant H teaches at a school that serve youth in grades K-8; however, the afterschool program serves youth from K-12. He talked about his commitment to his students by continuing to have an open door for them. He said that several of the students that are now in high school continue to come back. He noted:

I have four kids that came yesterday to the afterschool program that are now in high school, that I taught here, and they still like, "Now we'll be here tomorrow, Mr. Keith!" like they never left; like...and that's that relationship that I've built through years with them.

(Teacher Participant H)

He further shared that one of these young men ran away from home, and even though his father and stepfather are present in his life, the youth's mother called him to see if he could talk him into coming back home. The teacher participant feels that his time working in the afterschool program and in coaching the basketball team allowed him to develop deep and meaning relationships with the students. He remarked:

I feel like it's just that *time* I put forth by working in afterschool and during basketball practice; I'll be honest, most times I don't leave until about 8 at night. I'm here from 8 to 8, and so they know, "Hey, you need me bro, I'm here. I don't care if its math or football, whatever!"

(Teacher Participant H)

This example speaks to the mentoring relationship that many teachers develop with their students by bonding with them during afterschool. Teacher Participant F confirmed that in many cases, working in the afterschool program gives teachers an additional outlet to explore and expand their philosophy of teaching. He indicated:

I think it [teaching philosophy and working in afterschool] enhances. Because there's things I can't do in school that I can do in afterschool, and the students know that.

(Teacher Participant F)

He explained that during the school day there is only fifty minutes in a class period to teach the lesson, accomplish the academic standard goals for the day, and to transition to the next class. There is little time to develop a meaningful relationship. However in afterschool, there is time to sit down and just talk to the students, to learn about each other, and to talk about important issues. He added:

....So I love afterschool for that. We just sit there and we'll *talk*. It's fine and everybody enjoys themselves.

(Teacher Participant F)

Professional Development. Almost all of the teachers acknowledged that the professional development trainings they attend in afterschool prepare them to recognize and support the unique needs of the youth participants. Several declared that they have incorporated many of the new teaching strategies or techniques into their school day instruction. One teacher participant noted:

.....So those experiences have enriched my teaching style 'cause I've learned *from them* how better to prepare my lesson, and eliminate the mistakes, and still make my lesson more impactful, more focused, more hands-on, to see them grow in that aspect.

(Teacher Participant A)

Again, other teachers avowed that they learned how to better interact with their students on a personal level, to partner with their parents, and how to implement alternative homework assessments. Teacher Participant G shared:

I think the trainings that we received did help me more in terms of *my classroom*. It helped me more in terms of how I can relate with my parents and what types of things I could do with homework with *my kids*.

(Teacher Participant G)

Teacher Participant G added the professional development training would also be helpful for all school teachers to attend. Another teacher participant further supported this statement as he remarked:

It's almost like I'm *cheating*, 'cause I get to see a professional development training for *afterschool* that I apply to daytime school. I get double the information, and getting *paid* for it? That's awesome!

(Teacher Participant E)

Albeit, many of the teacher participants found the trainings beneficial in helping them grow professionally, there was not always a smooth transition in incorporating these teaching strategies in the school day due to conflicts of school day administrative goals. Some of these conflicts had to do with the time constraints of class periods, the amount of information the needed to be covered, and the class size. The afterschool program allowed for smaller classes, additional assistance classroom helpers, and greater opportunities to explore the integration of the arts and experimental group projects.

Several of the teacher participants suggested ways for a better integration between school and afterschool that would allow more flexibility to explore new teacher learning. Teacher Participant C expressed that having some of the teachers from the school day either work or volunteer to stay once a week or once a month afterschool on a rotating basis to assist with some of the non-teacher or non-academic afterschool program staff would give the staff consultation time and give students an extra three hours to talk to the teachers. The significance of this expressed comment was illustrated in a teacher

participant remark when she described such collaboration by happenstance worked for her. She noted:

I have the math teacher that I talk with probably like every other day about what's happening in the classroom. There was a time, (chuckles) when a student brought a math problem to me and, I was showing her the way that *I* know, and she's like, "Well, that's not the way I was taught," and I was like, 'Well, are you sure?' I spoke to the math teacher and she showed me the way they were being taught what to do and ...oh, I actually work with the reading teacher as well...

(Teacher Participant B)

Teacher Participant B suggested yet another option to support and encourage collaboration between the afterschool program and the school day staff. She suggested setting aside time during a professional development training for afterschool staff and invite school day teachers to have different counseling sessions, similar to when parents come to open house parent conferences, so they would be able to talk to them about students' needs and curriculum implementation. She commented:

I speak to some of their teachers now, but having a once a month meeting with their teachers to see, what exactly like my girls are doing in the classroom academically and, um, even behavior-wise, just to see what the difference between them are in school and afterschool, and maybe working on *that*, things that I could work on in the afterschool program.

(Teacher Participant B)

Conclusion

"What transformative processes are experienced by teachers who decide to work in an afterschool program located in an underserved community?" is research question two. The teachers discussed the instructional differences of working and teaching in the afterschool program versus teaching during the school day. The most notable difference was that teaching in the afterschool program allowed for more one-on-one individualized attention that greatly supported the academic success of the African American youth. As observed in research question one, the teachers also noted that working in the afterschool

program allowed them to informally build lasting relationships with the students through extended exposure to them in a relaxed setting. Furthermore, the professional development trainings provided new skills for the teacher participants that they were able to use during the school day and share with other colleagues that did not work in the afterschool program.

These examples lead to the theme that emerged for research question two:

Breaking Barriers: Building Relationships with students through strategies learned via personal interaction and professional development trainings.

Research Question #3:

The third research question asks, “What do teachers believe is the role of teacher learning in ensuring teacher effectiveness for educating African American youth from underserved backgrounds?” Thirteen interview protocol questions that related to categories of family upbringing, K-12 educational experience, teacher education preparation, professional growth, and educational practices of working with African American students were designed to elicit responses to answer research question three. Through interview analysis, open coding, and axial coding three iterations of codes were generated to hone in on the emerging patterns and themes. Some of the first iteration of codes, derived from the theoretical frames of culturally responsive pedagogy and ecological systems theory, included:

- Career Path
- Inspiration for Educating African American children
- Teaching Philosophy
- Family
- Role of Students Race/Class/Gender

Some of the second iteration of codes included:

- Passion
- Exposure through TP program
- Community Roots
- Personal/Gender Race

The final emerging theme for research question three is: Sharing personal and professional career path to becoming a teacher: Lessons learned.

Family Upbringing. When asked to describe their background, family, and community that they were raised in, many of the participants shared stories of hardships, split family units, and growing up in a rough community.

Um, I grew up in a very, I'd say, in a poor community where there were drugs going on, outside of the building. There were lots of violence and, um, just not a very safe neighborhood.

(Teacher Participant B)

Two of the participants grew up in the same predominately Black community and vividly described being surrounded by crime related to gang violence and drugs sells; as well as exposure to a positive working class families. The participants described their resilience in being able to choose the right path in order to not get caught up in the negative aspects of the community. They were able to this by being involved in church, school activities, and having a positive family role model. The similar descriptions of their community are below:

I'm from the city...grew up in *Oaktown*, which is a predominantly Black neighborhood; um...better than most, I'll say that. I guess it was kind of rough growing up in a Black neighborhood, you gotta deal with the streets, so...I was exposed to the streets. I was able to escape. Um, it was a low-income area so...people did what they had to do to get by, whether it be, um, working a nine to five, selling drugs or a life of crime; it was all there.

(Teacher Participant F)

The other teacher participant affirmed:

Um, I'm from Oaktown. I've lived on this same street since I was five. There were gangs in my middle school years. A lot of shootings, and now it's become a little bit more *diverse* and a little *safer*. Um...the part of the community that I saw *a lot* of, because I also went to church, at Hope Church, ...it was kind of like a *working* class; you knew everybody around you, everybody was trying to do something for themselves, for their family, um, and it was a lot of fun. I mean, the fact that I went to Oaktown School and most of my friends lived in the good part of the community.

(Teacher Participant G)

Two participants spoke about growing up in a split household, in which their mother and father were separated. They described their neighborhoods as being mostly white with little diversity in race and age. They noted:

I grew up in Charlestown, so...Quad A School District, Charlestown High School; mainly White background, as far as in the school. I grew up with...my mom and my younger sister; my mom and dad are separated...divorced.

(Teacher Participant C)

The other teacher participant indicated:

I spent half my childhood growing up in the suburbs from twelve to age eighteen, I went to live with my dad in the country and that was a whole different culture shock there, 'cause how my mother raised me versus how my dad raised me are two different things; they're distinct as night and day. Um, the community I grew up with was very loving in both aspects. I had lots of friends, um...didn't have a lot of African-American kids. There wasn't much in my neighborhood; that has since changed. The community that I lived in has become diverse; senior citizens are the majority, no matter what color or race they are, so...I am from Whitsburg.

(Teacher Participant A)

Yet, others shared stories of growing up in a safe, middle class working community with both parents and siblings and no community violence or crime. They described their communities by using words such as "good", "normal", "perfect", "square" and mostly "white".

I'm from the Hampton, in Witsburg. I grew up with my mom, dad, and younger sister and bother, um...normal suburban life. So all the kids in my elementary school were White, then in high school, there were just a handful of African-Americans. Back when I was growing up, was pretty much all...you know, all the people in my neighborhood were White, middle-classed.

(Teacher Participant D)

The other teacher participant noted:

I'm from Witsburg. I'm from a small community called Heckton Heights. My neighborhood is a nice little perfect square neighborhood; it's a good neighborhood, not a whole lot of violence or anything like that. I'm from a family of seven, so mom, dad, three brothers and a sister. We are all real close in age. Yeah, a big family...in a two bedroom house!

(Teacher Participant E)

The difference in description of the communities was striking because the predominantly white neighborhoods were described as *good* and *normal* and the Black neighborhoods were described as *bad* and *violent*. Despite the differences in the teacher participants' family and communal upbringing, there was a story unfolding that planted the seed for their budding future career choice of educating African American children from underserved communities. One participant shared:

I was just always surrounded by the public school atmosphere, so I *knew*, no matter what, that's where I wanted to go and...to be in that environment...as far as being prepared for it, I don't think I was until I actually got out there in the field and sat down and started doing it myself.

(Teacher Participant E)

During their interviews, many of the teacher participants shared some of the challenges they faced growing up with their family, community and schooling exposure that led them to want to teach in a public school setting.

K-12 Educational Experience. The K-12 schooling experience of many of the participants varied from being “safe” to being treated unfairly to recognizing instances of racism and educational injustices. All of these factors, at the time, unknowingly, were molding and shaping the teacher participants' towards being aware of educational injustices and towards becoming culturally responsive teachers.

Two teachers participants discussed themselves as being average students that did not excel academically, but they specifically remembered their grade school teachers as being a turning point in their redirection of being interested in school.

Um, I went to public school all my life. I was a pretty average student, no honors or anything. I remember, my third grade teacher stands out to me when I think about my education experience because of her stepping out of the classroom and coming to...I ran track...my track meets. Just knowing that she cared more about me as a *person* than just a student in the classroom stood out to me.

(Teacher Participant B)

The other teacher participant acknowledged:

I was a bad kid when I was younger (laughs), 'til about middle school and then I shaped up. I think it was my teachers that changed my opinion on school. High school I actually really liked it, and that's part of the reason why I became a teacher. I'd say the teachers and I guess maybe just me *growing up* and becoming mature. But I would definitely say some of the teachers I still remember to this day.

(Teacher Participant C)

Later in their narratives, these two teachers continued to talk about the importance of caring and reaching out to students by developing a relationship with students both in and out of class. Both provided examples of being culturally responsive teachers by asserting one of the tenants, set forth by Ladson-Billings (1995) and Gay (2000): Attempt to create a climate of caring, respect, and the valuing of student's cultures in the classroom.

Teacher participant B further commented on sharing personal stories as away to educate African American youth by connecting with them:

I think sharing...just as a Black teacher, sharing *your* story, and I think this is with *all* students, just being *normal*; just letting students know that you are a human being,... like having pictures up of your family, letting them see who you *are*; sharing where you come from, and what you've come out of, and connecting to them that way.

(Teacher Participant B)

And teacher participant C further explained:

I think growing up being *bad*, I kind of learned how to *talk* to kids who maybe have that same kind of edge to the and now if they are mad or upset that

day...instead of yelling at them, I kind of know, like, to really just get down and *talk* to them.

(Teacher Participant C)

Racism. Four of the participants discussed personal incidences of racism during their K-12 educational experience between African-American students and White students or administrators. These acts of racism happened during academic instruction and during sporting events. In further follow-up about the incidences, I learned that none of the school administrators were reprimanded for the actions. The teacher participants described the occurrences as shocking and they were literally caught off guard with the actions, deceit and language they were subjected to as students on school grounds. One teacher described an incident that occurred during his public high school sporting event:

I remember playing sports and there being all kind of *riots* and *fights* just because of the color of peoples' skin, when we played Boston High School, which is a predominately White school. I remember us having an all Black basketball team playing against Boston High School; that was the first time I really experienced a little bit of *race* or *hate* or any sort of derogatory name.

(Teacher Participant E)

This teacher further explained that the incident was a teaching moment for him because as a white male, this was his first experience of being involved in a racially hostile situation and feeling unsafe due to an incident that was initiated by members of his own race. He had grown up in a predominately white neighborhood and attended public schools his whole life that he described as having either a 60/40 or 70/30 ratio of white to black student population. He said the experience made him feel uncomfortable and uncovered his naiveness of racism. This incident led him to build better relationships with his African American friends. He further stated that as a teacher he does not tolerate any negative racial remarks from his students and is quite appalled by how some African American students put each other down with their choice of words and negative attitude towards education. He remarked that he takes advantage of every opportunity to uplift and praise African American students through his teaching lessons and interactions with

them. These actions exemplify the culturally responsive teaching through what Gay (2000) calls emancipatory because he works to release the intellect of students of color from the constraining manacles of mainstream canons of knowledge and ways of knowing.

Another teacher participant described his K-12 educational experience as being negative. He felt that he did not get the attention he needed because he was a Black student that attended a predominantly white school. During our interview he shared several instances of racial encounters that he endured from coaches and administrators.

I feel like I didn't get the assistance I needed. I didn't have too many teachers that reached out to *me*, most of the teachers could care *less*. I think a lot of it had to do with me being Black, honestly. I mean, people might not want to think that, but I went to Buckstown High School and it was predominately White.

(Teacher Participant H)

He said he ended up eventually having issues with the administration, based off some things that had to do with race. He indicated:

There was a time where the assistant principal was like, "I hope you don't do anything with your life and you become a bum..."

(Teacher Participant H)

In addition to his race, he believes that he was singled out and targeted because of athletic ability. He excelled not only in the classroom but, as a basketball, baseball, and football star that eventually led him to play professional football in the footsteps of his uncle that also attended the same high school about 10 years before him. Even though he brought some positive publicity to the school by being featured on high school sports programs, he described the town he grew up in and the school district as being run by the "good old boys" club that wanted the attention to be on their sons. He explained hostile situations that were aimed at him and eventually caused alienation from his peers at school. He explained:

I almost fought a hall monitor because he called my girlfriend a “nigger-lover” one time, and I grabbed him, and I was gonna put it on him and they ended up suspending me from school for that. I’m like, ‘But he still gets to *work*?’ He was like a forty-year old man... At the time, I was dating a White girl that was *cute* and they really weren’t *with that*. ...that’s where the whole “nigger-lover” and all that type of stuff came from.

(Teacher Participant H)

This teacher participant currently serves as the physical education teacher and the athletic director at his school of employment. He says he constantly shares his educational and athlete journey with the students and engages them in dialogue about character, respect, and anger management, as well as the importance of achieving both on and off the field.

Educational inequalities. Some participants spoke to the educational inequalities of the difference in their teachers’ attitudes and perceptions of quality instruction given to students in general mainstream classes that were populated by mostly African-American students versus the level of teaching and interest given to students in advanced scholar tracked classes. One teacher participant reminisced on such an experience and tells a story about how he was involved in what he believes to be an educational injustice that was racially motivated. He explains:

Absolutely, yeah. That’s definitely one thing apparent. I mean, there were PSP, CAS [scholar classes], and mainstream classes. In the CAS classes they were doing all these interesting activities and going on educational field trips. They were doing *actual* science experiments in their chemistry and physic classed; whereas we’d be doing book work and stuff like that, so I can only *imagine*, like, some of the behavioral issues that were going on in the mainstream classes, that they didn’t get to experience *anything*.

He goes on to share:

In fact, in my senior year, I had to sit a trigonometry class and it was a mainstream class, it was *miserable*. ...I played volleyball my senior year, and I literally remember telling my teacher that I really need a B or better, or my coach isn’t going to let me play.’ ...I think I had an F in that class at the time. He bumped me up to a D and all of a sudden, I had a B on my next reporting term. (Laughs) And the behavior was terrible in there...maybe he saw me as one of the

ones who was *different*. Especially now, because I'm an educator, I can look back and like, 'Holy cow! He didn't teach me anything!'

So, yeah, absolutely. My girlfriend at the time, had the same teacher for math was CAS classes and they were doing all this cool stuff, hands on, working in groups, had their *MacBooks* in the class and whatnot, using the computer lab programs, whereas we were using an overhead projector to do trigonometry. I don't even know what I *learned* in trigonometry, I can truly tell you that because I didn't do *anything*. It was terrible.

(Teacher Participant E)

Interestingly, the above teacher participant and the teacher he described are both white.

The teacher participant later describes how this experience has affected his cultural lens and his commitment to teaching "fairly" to all students. He feels that teaching and working in public school with African-American students helps to personally "right" some of the "wrongs" that have committed through educational injustices.

Another teacher participant framed her K-12 education experience as being caught between two worlds that did not always seem connected. She was in a magnet program, a specialized curriculum themed track that focused on the German language. Although she attended school in her community, she felt isolated, particularly by her African-American peers and felt that she needed to prove that she was still *cool* and belonged to the neighborhood. At the same time, she mentioned having to also show that she was connected with her classmates in the magnet program that was a 60/40 mix of African American to White students. Her description of this imbalance is as follows:

I got into the magnet program at Oaktown School for German, and the dynamics of the class changed, because they bussed a lot of kids in so it was a more *diverse* group. We were kind of *isolated*, that German magnet program so even though it was in a neighborhood school, we were kind of off to the side a little bit...like, they called us the "German kids" and...we went on fieldtrips; it was just a totally different program inside of that school.....

She further goes on to say that her African American peers treated her differently:

They looked at you as the "German kids" you had to kind of *show* to the neighborhood kids that you were still cool, you know what I mean? Like, even though these are my classmates and I'm in this program, I still live down here, so...you had to...you had to be *both*.

(Teacher Participant G)

Many African American students who attend public schools in urban communities experience this teacher participant's story. There seems to be a struggle between excelling academically and being socially accepted amongst your African American peers. In fact, later in this teachers' narrative she discusses how she handles this same reoccurring negative perspective in her current classroom of 100% African American students. She addresses issues of challenging the students to read books and embracing academic success as a positive goal that leads to future career success.

Inspiration. When talking about their path to becoming a teacher and who inspired them, many of the participants discussed role models, past teachers, and family members for having the most influence on them. Three participants talked about their mothers' having the greatest influence in their decision to pursue education as undergraduate students. Two teacher participants, specifically, had entered school with a major other than education. They said that their mothers spoke to their inner self -being and pointed out the observed interactions of how they handled situations with siblings and other kids.

My mom was really the one that pushed me towards teaching just because she knew I was really good working with kids. She *knew* that about me and she kind of *pushed* for me to go towards the teaching aspect of instead of majoring in graphic design.

(Teacher Participant C)

Another teacher participant stated that in grade school she initially dreamed of being a teacher just like her mother, but switched to major in cosmetology because she liked doing hair and looking glamorous as a teenager. In her second year of college, her mother told her that she needed a real major and not a hobby as a career in order to make sure she had a sound future in a career with progression with benefits. She said she was resistant

to switch her major until her mother said she would not continue to pay for her to major in a hobby. As a child she loved playing school with her friends, so reaching back to this love was not a difficult decision for her. She explained:

My mom was always stressed out, especially when she got her principal-ship, because she had to take so much of her job *home*, but I saw that she still enjoyed it so much that I never really paid much attention to the stress of the job; I just saw, like, ‘Wow, she’s really working hard!’ That’s how it...interpreted to me. So, my mom was my main inspiration for being a teacher. I had favorite teachers, but, um, I don’t think any of them inspired me as much as mom did.

(Teacher Participant G)

Still another teacher, Participant B, shared an inspirational story of being driven by the words and memory of her mother to not only graduate from high school but to go after all her dreams and desires. She stated:

So my mother inspired me to just *go for* whatever in life. Even after she passed away, because of *her* and who she was in my life, she still inspired me, even not being here on earth, she like inspired me to get my Masters degree and to become a teacher, and just to be the person I am today.

(Teacher Participant B)

In her narrative she talked about growing up poor in an urban city in a single parent household with an older sister and younger brother. She was an average student in school and encouraged by her mother to start running track at the age of seven to provide opportunities for alternative options of *making it out* of the neighborhood. Her mother told her, “You have to run your way through school. She kept saying “Scholarship, Scholarship”. She professed that in the ninth grade, she did not know what that meant and she pondered, “run my way through school?” She said:

“Like, we didn’t have it, we don’t have the money, and you need to go to college to get an education, and if you can go through college through track, that’s what it’s gonna be.” So she inspired me just to *go for* whatever in life.

(Teacher Participant B)

This teacher has taught in elementary and high schools and works with middle school students in the afterschool program. She shares her personal story with the students every chance she gets so that it can be a source of inspiration to them. She states that many times the students, in particular African American students from a similar background as hers, often give excuses for not doing their work, attending school, and being motivated. In addition to preparing the students to academically excel, she feels it is her duty to civically, socially, and morally educate them to be productive students. According to Gay (2000), this teaching characteristic is evident of culturally responsive teaching that is multi-dimensional and empowering. The teacher participant showed her students that she expects them to success and she committed herself to making success happen for the students. Also in her instruction, emotional beliefs, values, ethos, opinions, and feelings, are scrutinized, along with factual information and physical behaviors to make curriculum and instruction more reflective of and responsive to ethnic diversity.

For teacher Participant H, in addition to crediting his mother and grandmother in raising him in a Christian home and providing a nurturing environment, he described his desire in becoming a teacher was a way to be a role model for African American youth, especially for Black males both personally and academically. He grew up without a father and no real male figure in his life. He felt it would be an opportunity for him to represent the black male, especially since there were not and continue to be a shortage of black male teachers in K-12 settings. He also talked about the discouraging disconnect that he observed as a student and still as a teacher with over 12 years of teaching experience between African American male students and White female teachers.

I felt like there was a *disconnect* between Caucasian *female* teachers and African American male students. There are *cultural differences* between the two that contributes to a lot of clashes. That was kind of why I wanted to be a teacher, I just wanted to be able to stand in the gap. I didn't have a father and there really wasn't a male figure for me *at all* throughout my whole life. I knew that I was

missing a male figure, and I just wanted....to kind of *be* that male figure and *represent our kids*.

(Teacher Participant H)

In his narrative he frequently talks about staying involved in school activities and being there for the students beyond school hours, which is why he loves working in the afterschool program. He feels that working in the afterschool program allows him to connect with the students in a deeper and personal level and provides the flexibility to discuss things that affect black males as students and young men. Teacher Participant H also explained that he wanted to become a teacher to help special needs students that he felt was marginalized by the school system. He witnessed the struggles and difficulties his aunt had with negotiating the educational system to provide her son a quality education despite his medical condition. He noted:

I have a cousin who has Down Syndrome and I saw the struggles that my aunt had. I wanted to know more and I wanted to see if I could help with that, so I moved from wanting to be a health and PE teacher to wanting to concentrate in Special Education.

(Teacher Participant H)

Another participant discussed in great detail his heart felt personal passion of becoming a teacher because he wanted to be an advocate from the “inside” because of injustices he witnessed in the school system in educating his son. He averred:

I ended up teaching to be that *advocate* from the *inside*...to change the system, because, if you’re going to *change* something, you can’t change it from wrong... ‘cause if they are doing it to *your* kid, what’s happening to the other kids?

(Teacher Participant A)

Participant A further shared his story about his son’s medical condition that proved to be a challenge for his teachers and school administrators. He said his son had a concussion when he was two years old that affected his learning ability. His son was a late talker, lacked social skills, and had epilepsy. He would also have frequent seizures in school and

was in his words, treated like a *leper* in school by his classmates and teachers.

Participant A had meetings with his son's principal, school psychologist, classroom teacher, and the special education teacher. He described the meetings as being intimidating with the school staff at one end of the table and him sitting at the other end all by himself. The meetings were non-productive with the school staff offering no suggestions on how to accommodate his son's learning disabilities. He said the situation got so bad that he threatened to get a lawyer and sue for discrimination. He noted:

I had to fight for my son's right to learn. This is what you do for your kids. Um, *that's* why I went into teaching..... to get him the help that he needed, I fought.

(Teacher Participant A)

Career Selection. While some knew growing up they wanted to become a teacher; others, similar to my story of graduating with a business degree and on the path of pursuing a graduate degree in business, first majored in another subject discipline area or worked in another career field before becoming a teacher.

Participant E shared that the public school he attended had a program called The Leading Teacher Program in Urban Education. The program partnered with the school of education of a local university and was designed to prepare students for 21st century classrooms in highly needed positions as leaders in education, especially in urban settings. However upon high school graduation, he went into computer science, so he could make a *bunch of money* once he completed college. He hated the course work and after a year, decided to switch to become an education major. He noted:

I ended up talking with some students *from* Education about some of the *great* things they get to do. And I was like, 'This...you know, that kind of sounds *awesome*,'

(Teacher Participant E)

During his teaching practicum experiences, he was placed at a K-8 school and recalls the excitement of the students and enthusiasm of the principal as he welcomed the students each morning in the auditorium to give the morning announcements. He said:

I'll never forget the first school that I went to. The principal would literally high five each student when they exited the auditorium saying, "Let's work together". ... I was like, 'This is what *I* want to do!

(Teacher Participant E)

Teacher Participant D shared that he served as an officer and captain in the military for five years and then pursued a career in teaching. He taught religious education classes for a total of eight years in his military service and his time in college. He explained:

I just liked working with kids, and I thought it would be something enjoyable and rewarding, from my experiences teaching religious education, so just thought that being a teacher was a good fit.

(Teacher Participant D)

He further noted that he received a Masters in Education from a Catholic University through an alternative teacher certification program that was similar to Teach for America. Teach for America program recruits a diverse group of leaders with a record of achievement who work to expand educational opportunity, starting by teaching for two years in a low-income community. The program provides intensive training, support and career development that helps the participant leaders increase their impact and deepen their understanding of what it takes to eliminate educational inequity.

He noted that the university sent out teachers into a variety of different schools, and that the teachers were mostly going to serve in communities that were probably a lot different from the ones where they grew up in that the children were a lot poorer and of different races and ethnicities than their own. While working as an AmeriCorps volunteer during his education program, he taught in a Title I school in the inner city located in the mid-west. Of his own school placement site he specified:

So in the school that I went into, it had a lot of, um, “English As a Second Language” students, Hispanic students, and African-American students, and, like I mentioned before, my experiences in education, everyone...all the students that I was with growing up, they were pretty much all White.

(Teacher Participant D)

Participant D felt that his experience in the military and teaching religious classes helped him to appreciate the unique and diverse environment he taught in because, like his college classmates, he grew up in a community and attended K-12 schools that were all middle-class white people. In addition to his personal experience, he shared that most of his coursework was completed on-line and that the professors designed the immersion teaching experiences to prepare the students to work with children whose race and ethnicity was different than their own. He claimed:

We just learned a lot about the different cultures and the different expectations, and the different experiences that different groups of people might have, so we could be aware of that going into the classroom.

(Teacher Participant D)

Similar to Participant D, the other teacher participants shared reflections of their teacher education program and talked about the context and scope of the program. The participants attended historically black colleges and universities and predominately white institutions for their undergraduate and graduate schools teacher training programs and certification. The participants shared varied views of how their teaching program prepared them to work with children whose race and ethnicity differed from their own.

Some of the participants were immersed in year long teaching experiences located at urban school districts in an underserved community; some only had a semester of immersion in a similar classroom setting serving low-income students; while two participants only had one multicultural course that focused on integrating cross-curricular activities. Most of them credited their college education programs, as well as their K-12 schooling experience, whether good or bad, with how they make sense of their

current assessment of being a teacher working with African-American students. Similar to Participant D, the other participants expressed that they learned by hands-on experiences and by getting out in the field into the classrooms. One participant summed up their views as:

I think what really helped me, to be honest with you, the classes *did* help, but what helped *more* was my internship experience attached to my classes. Like I was in the classroom with *students*, working with a mentor one-on-one, working with real live students and their parents, and real life school situations and, um, I think that helped a lot. I think without the internship, becoming a teacher with just those classes...you know, it's not *real*. It's not real enough for you to be placed in a classroom after the program without having an internship.

(Teacher Participant B)

Working in the Afterschool Program. Several of the in-service teacher participants believed that working in the afterschool program has helped them grow professionally as a teacher and working with African American children. The afterschool program provided a less formal learning environment that allowed the teacher participants to further develop as culturally responsive teachers. The participants learned classroom management skills, how to build relationships with the students, and the importance of knowing the family's home life atmosphere. The nurturing family environment of the Inspiration Afterschool program assisted in cultivating the participant teachers' in developing teaching strategies that extended beyond their teacher preparation programs. One participant noted:

I think that's [working in the afterschool program] something that really helped me understand the importance of, like, a *family atmosphere* in a school that has that sense of *community* and *family*...there's nothing like being here and working in the afterschool program. And like, I think our *numbers* and the character of this place kind of *show* that and its...it's a good vibe here, for sure.

(Teacher Participant E)

Another teacher participant added:

So, I think me working after school played a big part as far as making that transition smoother, with me having a classroom and dealing with kids, in that

setting...cause you learn how to manage the groups of kids, even for the short amount of time you are with them.

(Teacher Participant F)

Relationships Building. As echoed unanimously by the teacher participants, working in the afterschool program gives the students an opportunity to get to know teachers better, and vice versa; verses them coming straight into the classroom for a 45 minute period and then transitioning, or as a primary grade teacher, switching to teach another subject content area. Even less opportunities are given to develop authentic relationships with the students, especially with the shift of school systems strictly *teaching to the test*. One teacher participant commented:

We're in afterschool, we're joking, going on field trips, in the gym playing. I'm playing with them in the game room, so they just get to connect with you a little differently than in the classroom. So when they see you in the classroom, then you already have that *relationship* with them.

(Teacher Participant H)

The sentiment of relationship building and connecting with the students was expressed repeatedly by all of the teaching participants. One teacher participant claimed that relating to the students is being able to understand their background, their culture, and things that may be going on at home that they are dealing with. He indicated:

I may not have gone through the same exact thing, but I understand, and I may have friends that came up and had to go through the same situation.

(Teacher Participant F)

Being transparent with the students allows greater connectivity with them. One teacher participant indicated that she shares her story of adversity and triumphs that she faced while growing up with the students to encourage and motivate them to persevere through life challenges. She affirmed:

I think for me, personally, being from the inner-city and growing up the way I did, and having students in my classroom who have very similar experiences now, once I share my stories, it's like "Whoa, you did that. Like really?" And they

think, “Hey, I can do it. If *she* did it the way she did it, *I* can do it the way I’m in it right now,” so, yeah...

(Teacher Participant B)

Motivation was mentioned by many of the teaching participants as another avenue of engaging with the students; in particular, finding what motivates the students as a way to connect and build relationships with them. Teacher Participant B talks about how she conquered situations in her life at a young age and how avowing to those experiences helps the students realize what it means to work hard and move forward. Another teacher remarked:

You have to find out what is the *connection* you have,... it just helps you to understand where they may be coming from; being able to understand some of the things that make them *behave* the way they *behave* or *act* out or...what may *motivate* them.

(Teacher Participant F)

Educating African American Youth. In describing essential qualities of educating African American children, teacher Participant E credited his hybrid teaching experience of working in the Inspiration Afterschool program and teaching in the adjacent charter school in helping his cultural learning curve. He noted:

This is the first place I’ve ever worked at where *everything* is almost about the *rich* heritage and the culture that derived from African-American and Blacks, so I had to learn right away because almost every lesson that we taught last year or this year, always had some sort of tie in or connection to this community or the history of African Americans.

(Teacher Participant E)

This same thought of connecting with the students’ family heritage and integrating their history in the curriculum was acknowledged in every participant narrative. They also discussed additional essential practices in working with and educating African American children. These included having patience, being fair and consistent, and simply finding out what they enjoy doing. The participants mentioned that these practices were

important and rooted in having respect for the students. As affirmed by one participant in regards to respect:

...Because you're not gonna get their attention, you're not gonna get their respect, and once you don't have their respect, you're not gonna be able to *connect* with them.

(Teacher Participant C)

Some participants noted that these skills are important in working with and teaching not only African American students, but students as a whole. Incorporating learning games helps to break up long class periods and allowing students to move around is helpful because many African American children, especially males, are kinesthetic learners that learn best by being active and participating in hands-on activities. Offering rewards to students for completing a task gives the students motivation. One teacher noted that even though some educators frown upon giving rewards to students for doing their schoolwork, we as adults receive rewards for the work we do, like a getting a paycheck.

She avows:

So I think that's an important part to teaching my students is to know that, at the end of the week, if you all did what you needed to do, then I'll give you a free period on Friday and we can have a Classroom Store, and we can listen to music, but you *have to do what you need to do throughout the week*.

(Teacher Participant G)

Participant G also believes that allowing students to have some choice as in reward options and selecting from a menu of class assignments increases student interest and prolonged engagement in school. She described:

We have contracts in my classroom where...all of these things need to be done, but *you* can decide when you want to do them, so I'm going to give you *this* work time and *you* need to time-manage and figure out what it is you want to do right now.

(Teacher Participant G)

When configured appropriately for the age and grade level of the students, offering choice in assignment selections can also help students develop time-management,

decision-making, and leadership skills. Also, it enabling students to complete assignments aligned to their learning style preferences.

What About Culture? There were mixed expressions of views when the teacher participants communicated their thoughts on if a student's culture (race, class, gender, etc.) plays in their ability to be successful in school. Two teacher participants felt that the color of a student's skin did not mean anything in regards to their ability to learn. One teacher mentioned:

In my eyes, that means *nothing*. I mean race, class, gender, whatever! It means absolutely nothing. I see a student as just that, a *student*, not as a White high-level student or a Black low-level student, or a middle class...I see them as a *student*.

(Teacher Participant E)

I found it interesting that the teacher associated White students with high-level and Black students with low-level performance. In an effort to not be judgmental in attributing race to academic performance, the teacher responded in the norms of the society and fell into the stereotypical way of thinking blacks are less educated than whites.

Similarly, another teacher noted that education is the key to future success and opportunities rather than students' skin color, nationality, or culture. He contends:

I think being *fair* and showing them [African American students] that, just because the color of skin has nothing to do with it. When you get in the business world, it's gonna be about your abilities. What did you do, what can you do? And the future, to me...to *any* kid, is education. I don't think we push that enough, regardless of what color their skin is, what their nationality is, what their culture is, is why *education* so *important*. Without education, you're not gonna go anywhere.

(Teacher Participant A)

Basically he is describing that through hard work and dedication, one can pull themselves up by their bootstraps. He is assuming that the world is fair and prejudices do not occur. Also, his response does not take into account the difference in the quality of education

that is afforded to upper and middle class students versus to African American students from underserved communities.

Two teacher participants think that parental involvement weighs heavier over student's race, class, or gender in determining the factors of what causes African American students to be successful in school. Teacher Participant D noted that many students have problems that stem from home and they bring them to school. He comments:

Mmmm. I think it's more of...*parents* and the *environment* versus race, class or *any* of that. Like what type of environment are the kids dealing with everyday on a regular basis, 'cause I know kids who come from well-to-do homes who still have struggles in the classroom with behavior and stuff, so I just think it's the *parents*, I don't think it's *race*...so much that there is parental input and involvement.

(Teacher Participant D)

In essence, the teacher is expressing that a student's home life and the choices they make play a huge part in the success of a student. Mentors and role models in an afterschool program can be a supportive network to students who face challenges at home. Along those same lines, another teacher avowed that students' background does matter to a certain extent. He said:

It's *everything and nothing*. So, a lot of our kids may come from a background where mom, dad might not be home; dad's in jail, mom, you know, could be doing *whatever*, and I realize that that can *affect* them...

(Teacher Participant H)

Despite these negative odds, teacher Participant H believes that even though a student may be from this type of home situation, that doesn't mean that they have to stay that way. He understands that their background has made them that way, for at least now. He tells students, "This is not your only option." He further explains:

You might have a kid that got all those things stacked against him, but they're *nothing* like that. We have kids that will emulate their parents, but then we have kids that want to be *total opposites* of their parents.

(Teacher Participant H)

So even though he acknowledged it means everything in how students access to opportunities right now, two years from now it doesn't have to mean *anything*. He noted that it depends on how teachers and afterschool staff build relationships and how students grow from this point forward.

Along those same lines, another participant commented on the youth's home environment having an affect on the student's attitude towards school. Teacher Participant D remarked that race plays a part if the students are coming from a culture that doesn't *value* education because it makes it a little bit harder in the classroom to keep them on the right track. In explaining one situation, he exclaimed:

There's a student that I work with. His father told him that *education is not important*, and *that stuff's for chumps*. The dad didn't go to college and spent some time in prison, ...so the stuff that that kid's *hearing*, and then in class he doesn't want to work, and he shrugs it off and doesn't do his homework.

(Teacher Participant D)

He professed that coming from a home life like that, the student is going to have a different education experience than someone coming from a family where their parents went to college and value education.

Conclusion

In conclusion for research question three: "What do teachers believe is the role of teacher learning in ensuring teacher effectiveness for educating African American youth from underserved backgrounds?", the teacher participants shared reflective experiences about their family upbringing, K-12 educational experiences, and teacher preparation that all shaped and expanded their cultural orientation. The teacher participants all came to the field of education through different avenues, with some majoring in education as an undergraduate and others as a change in career. Through all their unique experiences, the teacher participants were led to work in the afterschool program serving African

American youth from underserved communities, through their sincere desire to help educate the students and inspire them to excel.

These examples lead to the theme that emerged for research question three:
Sharing personal and professional career path to becoming a teacher:
Lessons learned.

Chapter Summary

The results reported in this chapter emerged as a result of conducting a collective case study on in-service teachers' culturally responsive teaching instruction supported and developed through less formal learning and teaching environments. Specifically, I looked at teacher's beliefs, personal narratives, and culturally responsive teaching practices in educating African American youth attending a quality afterschool program in an underserved community. Eight in-service teachers participated in the study. Hundreds of pages of data accumulated as a result of collecting written interview transcripts, questionnaires, observational field notes, and relevant program documents. ATLAS.ti was utilized as the primary analytical tool to aid in making sense of the collected data.

Data analysis consisted of data collection, coding, data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing, and verification (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Due to the small population size of the charter school and the number of in-service teachers working in the Inspiration Afterschool program, an effort was made to summarize the descriptions as way to not reveal the identity of the study participants by directly contributing gender, race, and role to specific participants. Extra precautions were taken to protect the identity of the participants while presenting potentially identifiable characteristics or stories.

The themes that emerged as a result of analyzing the data were organized and presented in alignment with the research question it answered.

Opportunities, Mentorship, and an Avenue to grapple with Understanding Youth's Community and Family Origins, this theme focused of the teachers perspective of the role quality afterschool programs play in preparing them to effectively educate African American youth from underserved communities.

2. Theme Two: Breaking Barriers: Building Relationships with Students Through Strategies Learned via Personal Interaction and Professional Development Trainings, this theme highlighted the transformative process experienced by teachers who decide to work in an afterschool program located in an underserved community.

3. Theme Three: Sharing Personal and Professional Career Path to Becoming a Teacher: Lessons Learned, this theme explored what teachers believe is the role of teaching learning in ensuring teacher effectiveness for educating African-American youth from underserved backgrounds. Passion for the education field, serving the community, and building productive relationships with the youth captured the wide range of responses from the in-service teachers in describing their dedication in working in an afterschool program serving African American youth form underserved communities.

Each of the themes were supported with various narrative quotations from the transcribed interviews. These themes were developed as a result of utilizing the narrative inquiry method and reflecting on the guiding research questions, interview protocol questions, literature review, theoretical frameworks, code frequency tables, and quotation reports. Table 3.6 displays the code map that was created to maintain complete transparency and outline the three iterations of analysis that led to the development of the three themes (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002).

Chapter Five: Discussion

Introduction

This research study focuses on culturally responsive teaching instruction supported and developed through less formal learning and teaching environments. Specifically, I looked at eight in-service teacher's beliefs, personal narratives, and culturally responsive teaching practices in educating African American youth attending a quality afterschool program in an underserved community. During my interpretation of the interview transcripts, observational field notes, and relevant program documents, themes emerged to answer three specific research questions. The three research questions that guided this study are:

- 1). From a teacher's perspective, what role, if any, do quality afterschool programs play in preparing them to effectively educate African American youth from underserved communities?
- 2). What transformative processes are experienced by teachers who decide to work in an afterschool program located in an underserved community?
- 3). What do teachers believe is the role of teacher learning in ensuring teacher effectiveness for educating African-American youth from underserved backgrounds?

In this chapter, qualitative results are discussed and further interpreted to look at the three themes that emerged in answering the three research questions through the theoretical frames of culturally responsive pedagogy (Erickson, 1987, Gay, 2000, 2002) and Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). I believe these theories intersect when looking at the problem from a school-family-community perspective.

Moreover, a discussion of this study's implications for school-family-community partnerships and recommendations for future research are stated.

Discussion of Findings

This study adds to the literature on afterschool programs by adding the perspectives of in-service teacher's who develop culturally responsive pedagogical practices in their work with African American students from underserved communities. I will discuss the finding of this research study through the lens of the theoretical frames of culturally responsive teaching and ecological systems theory.

Theoretical framework of culturally responsive pedagogy. Using the six characteristics of culturally responsive pedagogy as outlined by Gay (2002): (a) validating; (b) comprehensive; (c) multidimensional; (d) empowering; (e) transformative; and (f) emancipatory, I will show how each of these major tenets manifested in the teacher participants' practices.

Validating. In describing why culturally responsive teaching is both validating and affirming, Geneva Gay (2000) provides five summary components of culturally responsive pedagogy that can be useful to teachers: (a) it acknowledges the legitimacy of the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups; (b) it connects school and home experiences; (c) It uses different instructional strategies to address all learning styles; (d) it teaches students to value their own cultural heritage and that of others; and (e) It incorporates multicultural materials into the curriculum. Ultimately, learning becomes increasingly meaningful for students when these five points come together in practice.

The teacher participants in the study provide many examples of practicing the tenant of validating by discussing how they connect the cultural heritage of the African American students into their instructional strategies. Several of the teachers, both African American and white, noted that their teacher preparation program on the undergraduate

or graduate level provided at least one course in multicultural education and a practicum experience in a multicultural setting; however, they credit working in the afterschool program as helping them understand, explore, and value effectively teaching African American youth from low-income and underserved backgrounds. The African American teacher participants noted that working in the Inspiration Afterschool program allowed them to stay connected to their cultural heritage and work in a community setting that provided them the flexibility to give back while practicing their passion for teaching.

Comprehensive. Comprehensive educators employ a holistic viewpoint addressing the entire child and are committed to helping culturally diverse students connect with their ethnic groups and cultural communities. Furthermore, they develop a sense of camaraderie and shared responsibility in the classroom that fosters an ethic of success that permeates all curriculum content and interactions (Gay, 2000). In this way, students are expected to internalize the notion that "learning is a communal, reciprocal, interdependent affair, and manifest it habitually in their expressive behaviors" (Gay, 2000, p. 30).

In confirming the tenet of comprehensive teaching through this study's findings, several teachers talked about working in the afterschool program by highlighting the benefits they and the students gained attending Inspiration Afterschool program. For both opportunity for them to develop, learn, and grow together. The afterschool program served as a professional learning community for the teachers through involvement in the culturally responsive professional development workshops focused on homework assistance, understanding the community, engaging parents, and behavior management. The afterschool program was located in the students' community and provided a safe and nurturing learning environment amongst their peers and their teachers. The students were able to receive individual instruction through this extended learning time that, as

validated by the teacher participants' narratives, transferred to increased academic success for the students during the school day. Also, the afterschool program provided a non-threatening platform for the teacher participants and the students to get to know each other better and develop meaningful relations outside of their roles of teacher and student.

Multidimensional. Gay (2000) describes culturally responsive pedagogy as necessarily multidimensional, encompassing numerous factors such as "curriculum content, learning context, classroom climate, student-teacher relationships, instructional techniques, and performance assessments" (p. 31) Multidimensional teachers go beyond having a fluid and caring relationship with students; they are supportive of and have high expectations for all their students, which results in increased academic and social achievement, as well as personal confidence in their abilities (Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Caring was a theme that emerged during the findings of research question number two, but was also woven throughout the teacher participants' narratives in describing why they continue to work in the afterschool program with African American youth from underserved communities. Through teacher interviews, Caring was defined as fulfilling the roles of parent, teacher, coach or an adult role model who serves as a motivational force in the children's lives. The teacher participants commented that working in the afterschool program provides a space for them to make personal connections with the students and show them that they care by relaxing, talking and communicating with outside of the traditional school hours. The characteristics of multidimensional and tangible examples of the theme of caring were stated throughout the in-service teacher narratives and intertwined within the other five culturally responsive characteristics.

Empowering. Teachers who practice culturally relevant pedagogy empower not only students by incorporating their interests and cultural backgrounds (Corson, 1998),

but they also empower and transform themselves by lifting the burden of being the class expert. As a result, co-creation of knowledge occurs with students in a learning community where open dialogue and questioning are encouraged (Harding, London, & Safer, 2001). The Inspiration Afterschool program served as a learning community for teachers to further develop this pedagogy. The teachers were not in their regular domain environment of the school building, but serving as facilitators of knowledge in the afterschool program. The program calendar was created by the afterschool program director that addressed the concerns and needs of African American youth from underserved communities. Students, parents, guardians, and community residents provided input to help develop the calendar of activities. The teacher participants assisted in the structured activities as academic coaches, recreation coordinators, mentors, and life-skills instructors. Several of the teachers noted that this relaxed atmosphere provided the perfect informal setting to build relationships with the students and that their conversations were about the youth's interests, hobbies, social interactions, dreams, and goals.

Gay (2000) explains that this pedagogy aims for "students [to] become change agents committed to promoting greater equality, justice and power balances among ethnic groups" (p. 34). In this way, students develop the knowledge, skills and values they need to become actively participatory in shaping their own learning and becoming social critics who can make reflective decisions and implement their decisions through effective action. These students practice these values and skills in different community contexts such as the classroom, the school and their neighborhoods.

Transformative. Gay (2010) explains that the transformative agenda of culturally responsive teaching is double-focused, "involving one direction that deals with confronting and transcending the cultural hegemony nested in much of the curriculum

content and classroom instruction of traditional education, as well as another direction that develops social consciousness, intellectual critique, and political personal efficacy in students so that they can combat prejudices, racism, and other forms of oppression and exploitation (p. 37).” The teacher participants were able to practice the tenet of transformative teaching as evident in their comments about the transformative processes of working with African American youth from underserved communities that they learned from the professional development workshops in the afterschool program. The new learnings transformed teacher practices in serving the African American youth, as well as in helping the students appreciate and respect their cultural heritage. The teachers explained that identifying and exploring the characteristics of the modality preferences for the students helped them develop lessons plans that centered on being a kinesthetic, auditory, and visual learner. Two teachers described how they create a menu of activities that infuses the three learning modalities for each curriculum unit that may include drawing and creating pictures, listening to the assigned books on CD, watching a TEDx or a YouTube video, writing a poem, rap, comic strip or advertisement to complete the assignments. These different instructional activities and homework games were incorporated to make connections with the students and to engage them in ownership of their learning.

Emancipatory. Culturally responsive teaching is considered to be liberating in that it promotes freedom and releases students of color from being confined to mainstream knowledge of knowing and learning (Gay, 2010). Emancipatory processes in their learning, was illustrated in students’ journals during the transition from the school day to afterschool activities. After the students had a light dinner and snack, they would receive instructional homework assistance during the first block of time before getting engaged in the arts and recreational activities. Before homework, the students would

journal about their day, current mood, thoughts and feelings. This reflection activity aided in calming the students and helped them to release anything that had emotionally built up during the day. Often times, the journaling activity served as discussion topics for the male and female mentoring sessions and also for the life-skills sessions. The students shared on a voluntary basis and depending on the age range, discussed issues relating to peers, home-life, violence in the community, teachers, accomplishments, and challenges. Although some of the teachers already used journaling in their language arts and English classes, they quickly learned the extended benefits of journaling and how it provides a safe place and needed time for the students to relax and unwind. In their narratives, several of the teachers noted that they incorporated journaling during their school day instruction in key transitional times at the start of the school day, after lunch, or at the end of a curriculum unit. These learning engagements encouraged and enabled students to find their own voices and to become more active participants in their own learning.

Theoretical framework of ecological systems theory. I believe that teachers can develop their culturally responsive pedagogy by connecting, analyzing and working through the lens the ecological systems theory as it places the youth at the core. Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979) proposed that human development must be understood in the complexity of relationships and structures in which people participate and which influence them. As such, he developed the Ecological Systems Theory that has four main systems, which consist of:

- (1) microsystems,
- (2) mesosystem,
- (3) exosystem,
- (4) macrosystem, and the

(5) chronosystem, that was later added.

I will show how each of these main systems manifested in the teacher participants' practices.

Microsystems. The microsystem of influence refers to the settings that are directly influenced by or influences the individual. These include immediate environments such as: (a) family; (b) peer group; (c) school; (d) childcare; (e) afterschool programs, and (f) sports teams. The Inspiration Afterschool program is a microsystem for the youth that is, (a) located in their community; and (b) that has parental involvement throughout the school year and summer programming. The teacher participants were able to learn about working with and educating African American youth from underserved communities by working in the afterschool program. Through this experience the teachers were able to learn more about the students and make cultural and communal connections with them. As noted in Villegas & Lucas (2002), teachers who know about their students' family lives are better prepared to understand the children's in-school behavior and to incorporate the "funds of knowledge" those families possess in classroom activities. Similarly, teachers who know about their students' social lives, outside of school can systematically tie the students' interests and concerns into their teaching (Darling-Hammond, 1996; Ladson-Billings, 1994). The teachers were able to bridge the experience of working within the microsystem of the Inspiration Afterschool program to build better relationships with the students and adapt their instructional teaching during the school to work with and educate the whole child versus just seeing them as individuals sitting in the classroom. Some of the teacher participants talked about how they incorporated more educational materials that centered around African American characters and culture which they learned by working in the afterschool program. These experiences fit within the tenants of culturally responsive teaching because the teachers

are incorporated the cultural heritage and aspects of the community environment into their classroom teaching.

Mesosystem. The mesosystem is noted as a process rather than an actual system of influence and refers to the interplay between two or more microsystems. It makes connections between the immediate environments of the microsystem; for instance, a child's home and school. Two of the teacher participants grew up and still live in the community of the Inspiration Afterschool program. As children, they actually attended programs held at The Destiny Youth Development Center, which the afterschool program is a part of. In their narratives, these two teachers explained that they grew up with many of the students' parents or family members. They expressed it was their choice and desire to work both as an in-service teacher in the charter school and in the Inspiration Afterschool program and viewed their involvement as a way to give back their community while serving as role models.

Exosystem. The exosystem are contexts that do not directly include the person as an active participant, but that affect the person. In other words, this includes external environmental settings that indirectly affect development, such as a parent's work place. As the teacher participants talked about some of the environmental factors affecting the academic learning of their African-American students, many of the teachers spoke about family and community backgrounds, peer pressure, and an non-engaging curriculum. One teacher participant expressed that coming from a home where parents went to college and value education provides a different experience to students who grew up in an opposite situation. In careful analysis of this statement, I would add that the home situation described could also motivate the student to pursue college and value education more because of the circumstances that they grew up in. One teacher expressed that adversities can mean both everything and nothing at the same time depending on how a person

navigates the circumstance. They can take it as crutch and make excuses as to not succeed or they can use the circumstance as a power booster to overcome and thrive despite the challenges.

Macrosystem. The macrosystem are structures that exist on a larger scale and look at larger cultures, which may have an affect on development. These include the economic or political culture, religious or ethnic groups. It refers to the overarching attitudes, ideals, and beliefs of society that impact teaching and learning. One teacher shared that he began to research African American leaders both past and present to increase his knowledge. He also created a weekly curriculum presentation series called, *Everyday African Americans: The Unsung Role Models*, in which he had the students research and share about African American leaders from youth to adults, living or deceased, in all sectors of business, community, and entrepreneurship. The purpose of the curriculum presentation series is to discover and present African Americans that are not well known entertainers, athletes, or political figures, but everyday people who worked hard to become scientists, leaders in their industry, business owners, or people in their families and community. The teacher hopes that the series allow the students to develop a deeper respect, appreciation and value for themselves and their cultural heritage. The teacher credited his working involvement in the Inspiration Afterschool Program with the idea to develop this series that he uses during the school day and as creative thematic lessons in the afterschool program.

Chronosystem. The chronosystem was later added after the original four main systems. This system considers the pattern of environmental events or transitions that a person can go through in life. In essence, it represents the process in which the entire system moves through time and includes the impact of historical events on the individual. The teacher participants spoke collectively of how they integrated the presidential

campaign and election of President Barack Obama in their class discussions and content material. The unifying message to the students was that despite your background, adversities, and challenges, through hard work, dedication to excel in school, and mentorship, as African Americans, you can become successful and achieve in life. The presidential campaign and election sparked interest in the students about important issues facing them as youth, their communities, and access to future opportunities. Three of the teacher participants helped the afterschool program create a debate team as an educational platform to discuss these concerns. This was a way for the youth to express their view-points and become active participants in their learning through social change in response to the historical event of President Barack Obama becoming the first African American president and being elected to serve to terms.

Limitations of the Study

This study has three main limitations that I bring forth for discussion. First, to allow for transparency in this qualitative research study, the purpose of the study was made known to the potential participants both during the staff meeting that I attended to recruit participants for the study and also as described on the consent form to participate in the study. This open acknowledgement of the purpose to get personal narratives of the teachers and their culturally responsive teaching practices of working with African American youth could have hindered the study in two ways. First, some teachers working in the afterschool program could have opted not to be apart of the study if they did not feel comfortable sharing and openly talking about their practices in educating African American youth due to some of their biases. Secondly, knowing the purpose could have lead some of the participants to think about and prepare structured answers to the interview protocol questions in order to seem as though they were answering the questions about educating African American youth *correctly*.

Secondly, my African American race could have persuaded the white teacher participants to give me a more culturally sensitive answer that may not have been reflective of their true thoughts. Also, my race could have led the African American teachers to feel overly comfortable with me and assume that I knew and identified with their same beliefs and challenges; therefore, not being as thorough with their responses.

Thirdly, the interviews took place during the 2012 presidential campaign, in which President Barack Obama was running for re-election against the republican challenger, Mitt Romney. During this time, print and media news was filled with headlines about racial tensions, economic status, and equality for all Americans with an emphasis on educational opportunities. Frequent discussion and inundation of these topics could have lead the participants to have a heightened awareness level and sensitivity to the responses of the questions about their cultural backgrounds and that of the students.

Implications for Future Research

This study has important implications for those in the out-of-school time profession and in the field of education who have a vested interest in working with African American youth from underserved communities and believe that culturally responsive professional development for staff and in-service teachers would contribute to the elimination of the educational achievement gap. First, additional research and continuation of this study can include interviewing the school building administrators, the afterschool program director, the youth, and their parents on their view of how they interpret the benefits of the in-service teachers culturally responsive teaching practices as developed through the professional development workshops. Second, in this study, I interviewed in-service teachers that worked at one particular quality afterschool program serving the identified population. An extension of this would include interviewing in-

service teachers that work at various urban schools districts and various quality afterschool programs serving African American youth from underserved communities. This could provide a broader perspective on the professional development workshops and topics aided in the development of their culturally responsive pedagogy. Third, formal in class observations can be done of the teacher participants during their work in the afterschool and during their school day instruction to fully observe, access, and evaluate their culturally responsive teaching instruction. Fourth, future research can follow this study's format and theoretical frames; however in using the ecological systems theory, analysis of the data can be analyzed by placing the teacher at the core instead of the youth. Extended research in these areas will better enable schools, families, and communities to draw on and combine the resources and skills they possess to promote greater achievement among African American youth from underserved communities through culturally responsive professional development. Incorporating culturally responsive teaching practices effectively means understanding and integrating the ecological environments of the youth.

Implications for Practice

This research study has implications for practice for those interested in serving African American youth from underserved communities to ensure educational justice and opportunities for them to achieve both in school and in life. Parents, educators, school administrators, community residents, community-based organization, and business leaders, can help to engage these youth by investing in and supporting teachers in developing culturally responsive teaching practices. Some practical ways of being part of the solution would be the following:

1. Colleges and Universities: Can create teacher education programs that require all students in their schools of education to complete practicums and field

placements, not just with school district that serve African American youth from underserved communities, but also with afterschool programs and community-based organizations that serve this student population. In addition to these practicums and field placements, mandatory educational courses should involve creating year long service-learning experiences in underserved communities in areas of educational inequalities, working with parents, and advocating for community educational collaborations such as with libraries, cultural centers, and museums.

2. School Administrators: School administrators can do a number of things to help bridge the gap between schools and communities in ensuring successful development of their teachers working with African American youth from underserved communities.

- Schools can develop afterschool programs within the school building and partner with community-based organizations to provide wrap-around and supportive services for the youth. The school-teachers can work in the school-based afterschool program and receive payment from the federal or district funding sources.

- Schools can allow community-based afterschool programs to use the school building rent-free. With proper staff in place from the afterschool program, this will allow full access to classrooms, gymnasium, art room, computer room, and other resource rooms. Again, the school can pay for the teachers to work in the afterschool program as tutors or instructional leads.

- School administrators can invite community-based organizations' leadership and staff to attend school and district sponsored professional development workshops.

3. Funders: Local, state, and national funders including, the foundation community, legislators, and law makers can approve budgets that allow continued increase in funding for out-of-school time programming in urban and underserved communities. The funding stream can be allocated towards schools and community-based organizations with an emphasis on encouraging community partnerships, development of in-service teachers working with African American youth, and parental engagement programs.

Conclusion

In researching in-service teachers' culturally responsive teaching instruction supported and developed through working with African American students from underserved communities in a quality afterschool program, I looked at eight teacher participants' beliefs and personal narratives and discussed the findings through the five tenants of culturally responsive teaching as described by Gay (2000) and the five ecological systems as described by Bronfenbrenner (1979). This dissertation study addresses a gap in the extant literature of afterschool programs bridging the gap between school, family, and community partnerships, in forming in-service teachers' knowledge learning development. Furthermore, this work provided examples of how quality afterschool programs attended by African American students from underserved communities can serve as a professional learning community to assist in the development of in-service teachers' culturally responsive pedagogy.

Overall, afterschool programs can provide professional development to in-service teachers both through the exposure and experience of working in the program that serves African American youth from underserved communities and in participating in the professional development workshops in the afterschool program that center around engaging urban youth, working with parents, understanding learning styles and teaching

strategies in working with African American youth. Learning in the informal and relaxed afterschool environment allows the in-service teachers to be in the context of community setting while given the opportunity to be creative, explore new teaching concepts, and interact with parents while developing healthy and meaningful relationships with the youth. The narrative and themes give voice to the in-service teachers beliefs, upbringing, and of their culturally responsive teaching instruction supported and developed through working with African American students from underserved communities in a quality afterschool program.

The first research question was: From a teacher's perspective, what role, if any, do quality afterschool programs play in preparing them to effectively educate African American youth from underserved communities? This question was answered by the following theme: Afterschool Programs Makes a Difference: Provides Extra Learning Opportunities, Mentorship, and an Avenue to grapple with Understanding Youth's Community and Family Origins

The second research question was: What transformative processes are experienced by teachers who decide to work in an afterschool program located in an underserved community? This question was answered by the following theme: : Breaking Barriers: Building Relationships with Students Through Strategies Learned via Personal Interaction and Professional Development Trainings

The third research was: What do teachers believe is the role of teacher learning in ensuring teacher effectiveness for educating African-American youth from underserved backgrounds? This question was answered by the following theme: Sharing Personal and Professional Career Path to Becoming a Teacher: Lessons Learned

I hope that this study allowed the readers to hear the narrative voices of the teachers working in the afterschool program speak to their continued desire and interest

in developing their culturally responsive pedagogy by building relationships with African American youth from underserve communities. I also believe that this study created desire for future research in the area of teacher development and working in the out-of-school time profession by focusing on the adult learning to help close the educational achievement gap of African American students.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

IRB Abstract Summary

Note: This dissertation study builds upon a pilot study I conducted in Fall 2010. The approved IRB protocol number that study is #10-124. This dissertation study focuses on in-service teachers' culturally responsive teaching instruction supported and developed through less formal learning and teaching environments. Specifically, I will look at teacher's beliefs, personal narratives, and culturally responsive teaching practices in educating African American youth attending a quality afterschool program in an underserved community. Furthermore, this work will investigate whether or not quality afterschool programs attended by African American students from underserved communities can serve as a professional learning community to assist in the development of in-service teachers' culturally responsive pedagogy. The three research questions that will guide this study are:

- 1). From a teacher's perspective, what role, if any, do quality afterschool programs play in preparing them to effectively educate African American youth from underserved communities?
- 2). What transformative processes are experienced by teachers who decide to work in an afterschool program located in an underserved community?
- 3). What do teachers believe is the role of teacher learning in ensuring teacher effectiveness for educating African-American youth from underserved backgrounds?

APPENDIX B
IRB Approval Letter



DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY

Office of Research

301 ADMINISTRATION BUILDING ♦ PITTSBURGH, PA 15282-0202

Dr. Joseph C. Kush
Chair, IRB-Human Subjects Office of Research
Phone (412) 396-6326 Fax (412) 396-5176
E-mail: kush@duq.edu

October 28, 2012

Re: Changing the paradigm in strengthening school-family-community partnerships: Afterschool programs serving as culturally responsive learning communities to in-service teachers – (PROTOCOL # 12-141)

Dr. Gretchen Generett
School of Education
Duquesne University
Pittsburgh, PA 15282

Dear Dr. Generett,

Thank you for submitting the research proposal of you and your student Tyra Good to the Institutional Review Board at Duquesne University.

Based on the review of IRB representative Dr. Ara J. Schmitt and my own review, I have determined that your research proposal is consistent with the requirements of the appropriate sections of the 45-Code of Federal Regulations-46, known as the federal Common Rule. The intended research poses no greater than minimal risk to human subjects. Consequently, the research is approved under 45CFR46.101 and 46.111 on an **expedited** basis under 45CFR46.110.

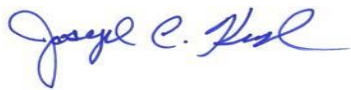
The consent form is attached, stamped with IRB approval and expiration date. You should use the stamped forms as the original for copies you display or distribute.

The approval pertains to the submitted protocol. If you or Ms. Good wish to make changes to the research, you must first submit an amendment and receive approval from this office. In addition, if any unanticipated problems arise in reference to human subjects, you should notify the IRB chair before proceeding. In all correspondence, please refer to the protocol number shown after the title above.

Once the study is complete, please provide our office with a short summary (one page) of your results for our records.

Thank you for contributing to Duquesne's research endeavors.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joseph C. Kush". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joseph" and last name "Kush" being more prominent than the middle initial "C.".

Joseph C. Kush, Ph.D. C: Dr. Ara J. Schmitt



APPENDIX C
IRB Informed Consent Form

DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY

600 FORBES AVENUE ♦ PITTSBURGH, PA 15282

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

TITLE:

CHANGING THE PARADIGM IN STRENGTHENING SCHOOL-FAMILY-COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIPS: AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS SERVING AS CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE
LEARNING COMMUNITIES TO IN-SERVICE TEACHERS

INVESTIGATOR:

Dr. Gretchen Generett
School of Education, Department of Foundations
and Leadership
600 Forbes Ave, Pittsburgh PA 15282
Tel.: 412-396-1890

STUDENT CO-INVESTIGATOR:

Tyra Good
Department of Foundations and Leadership
600 Forbes Ave, Pittsburgh PA 15282
Tel.:
Email: goodt@duq.edu

SOURCE OF SUPPORT:

This study is being performed partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the doctoral degree in
Educational Leadership at Duquesne University.

PURPOSE:

You are being asked to participate in a research
project that seeks to investigate teacher's beliefs,
personal narratives, and culturally responsive
teaching practices in educating African American
youth attending a quality afterschool program in
an underserved community. This will be a 60-90
minute audio taped and transcribed interview.
You are also being asked to take a questionnaire
to inquiry about your teaching beliefs and
teaching practices Relevant afterschool program
documents including lesson plans, activities
calendar, staff handbook, program's mission and
pamphlets, and training curriculum resource
materials will also be reviewed.

These are the only requests that will be made of you.

RISKS AND BENEFITS:

Your participation will benefit the continuous growth of in-service teachers' culturally responsive teaching instruction supported and developed through less formal learning and teaching environments. There are no risks greater than those encountered in everyday life.

COMPENSATION:

There is to be no compensation. However, participation in the project will require no monetary cost to you.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

Your name will never appear on any survey or research instruments. No identity will be made in the data analysis. Your responses will only appear in data summaries. All written materials and consent forms will be stored in a locked file in the researcher's home. To ensure confidentiality the transcribed interviews and collected documents will be stripped of any identifiers. All materials will be destroyed within 5 years of completion of the research.

RIGHT TO WITHDRAW:

You are under no obligation to participate in this study. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate at any time. Your participation is entirely voluntary and will not be connected in any way to your continued employment or performance evaluations.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS:

A summary of the results of this research will be supplied to you, at no cost, upon request.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT:

I have read the above statements and understand what is being requested of me. I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, for any reason. On these terms, I certify that I am willing to participate in this research project.

I understand that should I have any further questions about my participation in this study, I may call Tyra Good , Dr. Gretchen Generett 412-396-1890, and Dr. Joe Kush, Chair

of the Duquesne University Institutional Review
Board 412-396-6326).

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

APPENDIX D

Interview Protocol Questions

Initial Semi-structured Interview Protocol for Teachers

This list of questions is understood as an initial guide. Each interview will stress some areas more than others.

Title of Study: (Dissertation Study)

CHANGING THE PARADIGM IN STRENGTHENING SCHOOL-FAMILY-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS: AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS SERVING AS CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LEARNING COMMUNITIES TO IN-SERVICE TEACHERS

I would like to thank you again for agreeing to participate in this study. This will be a 60-90 minute audio taped recorded interview. The interview questions seek to gather specific information about beliefs, personal narratives, and culturally responsive teaching practices in educating African American youth attending a quality afterschool program in an underserved community. Relevant afterschool program documents including lesson plans, activities calendar, staff handbook, program's mission and pamphlets, and training curriculum resource materials will also be reviewed. To ensure confidentiality the transcribed interviews and collected documents will be stripped of any identifiers.

In-service Teachers

1. Please describe your background. Where are you from? Describe the community you grew up in?
2. How would you describe your K-12 educational experience?
3. How has your race influenced your K-12 educational experience?
4. How has your gender influenced your K-12 educational experience?
5. Please describe your career path to becoming a teacher.
6. Who were the people that guided or inspired you?
7. How would you describe your teacher education program? What changes would you make?
8. How did your teacher preparation help you to work with children whose race and ethnicity differ from your own?
9. How would you describe your philosophy of teaching? Where do you think those beliefs may have come from?
10. Please describe an experience that has helped you grow professionally as a teacher.
11. What qualities or practices do you think are important for working with the students in your classroom?
12. What role does a student's culture (race, class, gender, etc.) play in their ability to be successful in school?
13. What teaching skills are critical to helping African-American students? Why?
14. What is your assigned role and tasks in the afterschool program?
15. Why do you work in this afterschool program?
16. Please describe the strengths and drawbacks of your philosophy of teaching that contribute to afterschool programs.
17. Please describe your view of teaching in an afterschool program versus teaching in your regular classroom?

18. Please describe how you handle conflicts between your content and instructional goals with your administrator's goals?
19. What do you see as the afterschool program's effect on the academic success of the youth participants during their school day?
20. Please describe the professional development trainings offered to you in the afterschool program?
21. Do you feel that the professional development trainings are relevant to your position and help equip you better to interact with and teach the youth participants?
22. How do your professional development trainings prepare you to recognize and support the unique needs of the youth participants?
23. What professional development opportunities would be most helpful to you?
24. Are professional development opportunities shared between afterschool and the school-day?
25. Please describe any new teaching strategies that you have incorporated into your school day instruction as a result of being involved in the afterschool program?



APPENDIX E
Demographic Collection Form

DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY

600 FORBES AVENUE ♦ PITTSBURGH, PA 15282

Title of Study

CHANGING THE PARADIGM IN STRENGTHENING SCHOOL-FAMILY-COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIPS: AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS SERVING AS CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE
LEARNING COMMUNITIES TO IN-SERVICE TEACHERS

Demographic Sheet

Your name will never appear on any survey or research instruments. No identity will be made in the data analysis. Your responses will only appear in data summaries. All written materials and consent forms will be stored in a locked file in the researcher's home. To ensure confidentiality the transcribed interviews and collected documents will be stripped of any identifiers. All materials will be destroyed within 5 years of completion of the research.

Print Name: _____

Current School District and School Building of Employment: _____

Grade Levels served in Building: _____

Years of Teaching Experience: _____

Grade Level of Teaching/Grade Certification Level: _____

Highest Degree Obtained: _____

Post K-12 Schools Attended/Location: _____

Race/Ethnicity: _____

Age: _____

Gender: _____

Suggested Pseudonym: _____

APPENDIX F

IRB Abstract Summary (Pilot Study)

PROTOCOL SUMMARY

My research questions are:

- 1). Does increased professional development opportunities for afterschool school program staff help create an environment that inspires and motivates youth?
- 2). Do classroom teachers and/teacher aids who also work as afterschool program staff, see a positive impact in their teaching style as a result of their involvement in the afterschool program?
- 3). What leadership behaviors are evidenced in African-American afterschool program staff who work in programs that predominately populated with African-American youth from underserved communities?

The purpose of this study is to investigate the quality level and frequency of professional development opportunities that afterschool school program staff receives. Time and again, the bottom line of many afterschool studies is that one of the most critical features of high-quality programs necessary for achieving positive outcomes is the quality of a program's staff. Bills Gates stated, "As we look ahead to the next century, leaders will be those who empower others" (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). The leader is the "servant" of his followers in that he removes the obstacles that prevent them from doing their jobs. The true leader enables his or her followers to realize their full potential (DePree, 2004). Leaders are also responsible for future leadership. They need to identify, develop, and nurture future leaders.

APPENDIX G
IRB Approval Letter (Pilot Study)



Dr. Paul Richer, Chair, Institutional Review Board Human Protections Administrator
Phone (412) 396-6326 Fax (412) 396-5176
e-mail: richer@duq.edu

October 28, 2010

Re: Quality professional development in afterschool: a pilot study (Protocol # 10-124)

Dear Dr. Generett:

Thank you for submitting the research proposal of your student, Ms. Tyra Good.

Based upon the recommendation of IRB member, Dr. David Delmonico, along with my own review, I have determined that your research proposal is consistent with the requirements of the appropriate sections of the 45-Code of Federal Regulations-46, known as the federal Common Rule. The intended research poses no greater than minimal risk to human subjects. Consequently, the research is approved under 45CFR46.101 and 46.111 on an **expedited** basis under 45CFR46.110.

The consent form is attached stamped with IRB approval and expiration date. Ms. Good should use the stamped form as original for copies that she distributes or displays.

The approval must be renewed in one year as part of the IRB's continuing review. You will need to submit a progress report to the IRB in response to a questionnaire that we will send. In addition, if the consent form is still in use in one year, it will need to be renewed by our office. In correspondence please refer to the protocol number shown after the title above.

If you and Ms. Good propose any changes in procedure or consent process, you must inform the IRB of those changes and wait for approval before they are implemented. In addition, if any unanticipated problems or adverse effects on subjects are discovered before the annual review, they must be reported to the IRB Chair before proceeding with the study.

When the study is complete, please provide us with a summary, approximately one page. Often the completed study's Abstract suffices. You or Ms. Good should retain a copy of research records, other than those destroyed for confidentiality, over a period of five years after the study's completion.

Thank you for contributing to Duquesne's research endeavors. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Paul Richer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Paul" and last name "Richer" clearly distinguishable.

Paul Richer, Ph.D.

C: Ms. Tyra Good

Dr. David Delmonico

IRB Records

APPENDIX H
IRB Informed Consent Form (Pilot Study)



CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

TITLE: Quality Professional Development in
Afterschool: A Pilot Study

INVESTIGATOR: Tyra Good
Department of Foundations and Leadership
600 Forbes Ave, Pittsburgh PA 15282
Tel.:
Email: goodt@duq.edu

ADVISOR: (if applicable:) Dr. Gretchen Generett
School of Education, Department of Foundations
and Leadership
600 Forbes Ave, Pittsburgh PA 15282
Tel.: 412-396-4057

SOURCE OF SUPPORT: This study is being performed for pilot study that
will inform a dissertation study in the
Interdisciplinary Program for Educational
Leaders.

PURPOSE: You are being asked to participate in a research
project that seeks to investigate the quality level
and frequency of professional development
opportunities that afterschool school program
staff receives. In addition, you will be asked to
allow me to interview you. The interviews will
be taped and transcribed.

These are the only requests that will be made of
you.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: Your participation will benefit the continuous
quality professional development improvement
of the program. There are no risks greater than
those encountered in everyday life.

COMPENSATION:

There is to be no compensation. However, participation in the project will require no monetary cost to you.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

All written materials and consent forms will be stored in a locked file in the researcher's home. All materials will be destroyed at the completion of the research.

RIGHT TO WITHDRAW:

You are under no obligation to participate in this study. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate at any time.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS:

A summary of the results of this research will be supplied to you, at no cost, upon request.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT:

I have read the above statements and understand what is being requested of me. I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, for any reason. On these terms, I certify that I am willing to participate in this research project.

I understand that should I have any further questions about my participation in this study, I may call Tyra Good at _____, Dr. Gretchen Generett, and Dr. Paul Richer, Chair of the Duquesne University Institutional Review Board 412-396-6326).

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

APPENDIX I

Interview Protocol Questions (Pilot Study)

Interview Questions

Quality Professional Development in Afterschool: A Pilot Study

All Staff

1. What is your assigned role in the afterschool program?
2. How long have you been employed with this organization?
3. Did you receive a new staff member's orientation training? If so, please describe.
4. Please describe the professional development trainings offered to you?
5. How often are the trainings conducted?
6. Are these trainings held in-house, externally, or both?
7. Please describe the format styles of the professional development trainings (ex. On-line, workshops, peer-to-peer, etc)
8. Do you feel that the professional development trainings are relevant to your position and help equip you better to interact with and teach the youth participants?
9. How does your professional development trainings prepare you to recognize and support the unique needs of the youth participants?
10. What professional development opportunities would be most helpful to you?

Program Director/Site Coordinator: Additional Questions

Note: (All interviewees will be asked the questions listed under All Staff. This group will also be asked the following additional questions)

1. Please describe the organization's staffing levels.
2. Are the professional development trainings mandatory for all staff levels?
3. Does your organization sponsor or pay for these trainings?
4. How many hours of professional development are required annually for each staff position?
5. Does the afterschool staff participate in regular staff evaluations and given opportunities to build on needed skills?

Classroom teachers/Teacher aids that also works as afterschool program staff : Additional Questions

Note: (All interviewees will be asked the questions listed under All Staff. This group will also be asked the following additional questions)

26. What do you see as the afterschool program's effect on the academic success of the youth participants during their school day?
27. Are professional development opportunities shared between afterschool and the school-day?
28. Please describe any new teaching strategies that you have incorporated into your school day instruction as a result of being involved in the afterschool program?

APPENDIX J

Atlast.ti Code Frequency List

Code neighbors list

Code-Filter: All

HU: Dissertation Anaylsis2
File: [C:\Users\Tyra\Desktop\Dissertation Anaylsis2.hpr7]
Edited by: Super

Code: Afterschool Program: Makes a Difference {33-0}

Code: Afterschool Program: Role {16-0}

Code: Afterschool Program: Why do you work here? {9-0}

Code: Afterschool Teaching is beneficial {40-0}

Code: Afterschool Teaching is not beneficial {6-0}

Code: Career Path {15-0}

Code: Caring {38-0}

Code: Caring K-12 Teacher {5-0}

Code: Changes to Teacher Preparation Program {16-0}

Code: CHRONO {1-0}~

Code: Community {16-0}

Code: CRTC Comprehensive {22-0}~

Code: CRTEM Emancipatory {8-0}~

Code: CRTEP Empowering {20-0}~

Code: CRTM Multidimensional {17-0}~

Code: CRTT Transformative {6-0}~

Code: CRTV Validating {27-0}~

Code: Educating African-American Children {23-0}

Code: EXO {7-0}~

Code: Experience to Help Grow Professionally {12-0}

Code: Faith {6-0}

Code: Family {29-0}

Code: Gender Having An Influence {10-0}

Code: Inspiration {21-0}

Code: Instructional Conflicts {9-0}

Code: Instructional Learnings Shared with School Day {26-0}

Code: K-12 Schooling {21-0}

Code: Lack of Caring or Black K-12 Teachers {3-0}

Code: MACRO {13-1}~

Code: Mentoring {15-0}

Code: MESO {51-0}~

Code: MICRO {29-0}~

Code: Passion {17-0}

Code: Personal Race/Gender Factors {10-0}

Code: Practices in working with youth {18-0}

Code: Professional Development Not Beneficial {10-0}

Code: Professional Development Beneficial {21-0}

Code: Race Having an Influence {19-0}

Code: Relationships/Connections {47-0}

Code: Role of Students Race, Class Gender {14-0}

Code: Students' Community {11-0}

Code: Students Grades Improve from being in Afterschool {9-0}

Code: Teacher's Story {19-0}

Code: Teacher Preparation Program {24-0}

Code: Teacher Preparation Program Beneficial {18-0}

Code: Teaching Philosophy {26-0}

Code: Teaching Program Teaches about Race {12-0}

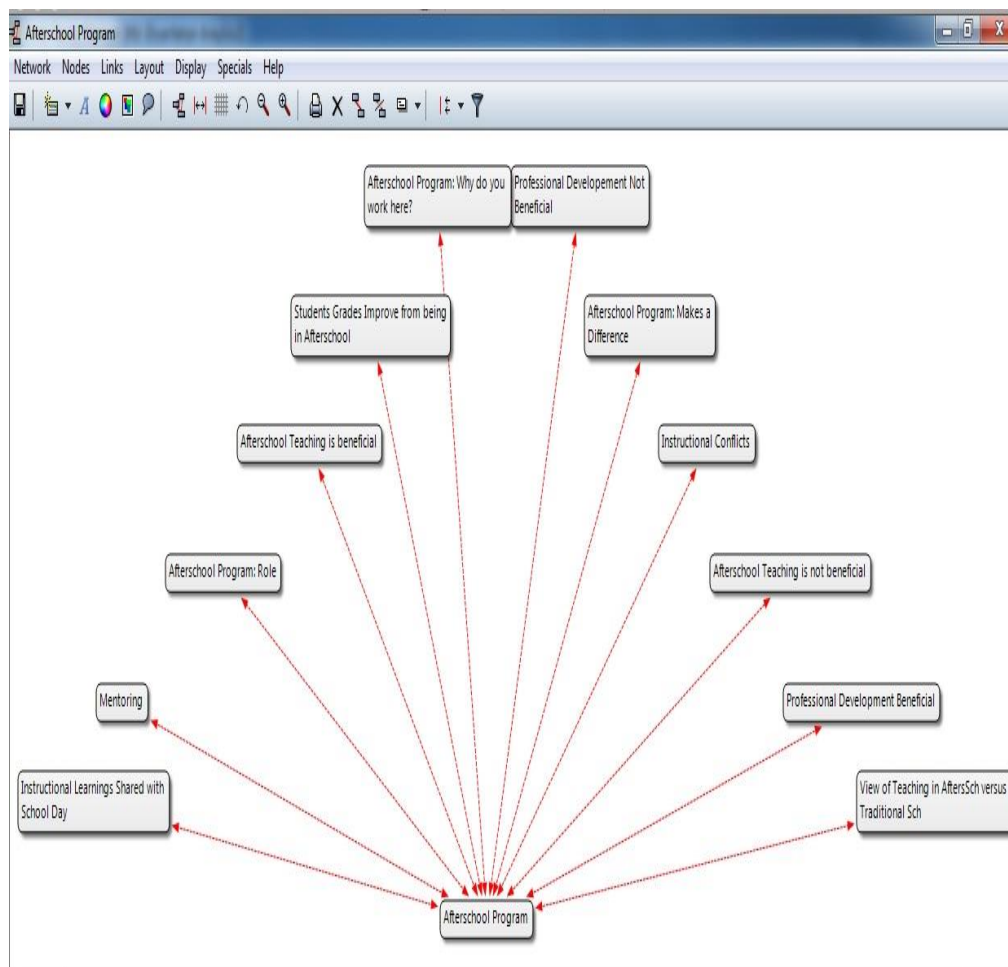
Code: Upbringing/Life of Teacher {23-0}

Code: View of Teaching in AftersSch versus Traditional Sch {42-0}

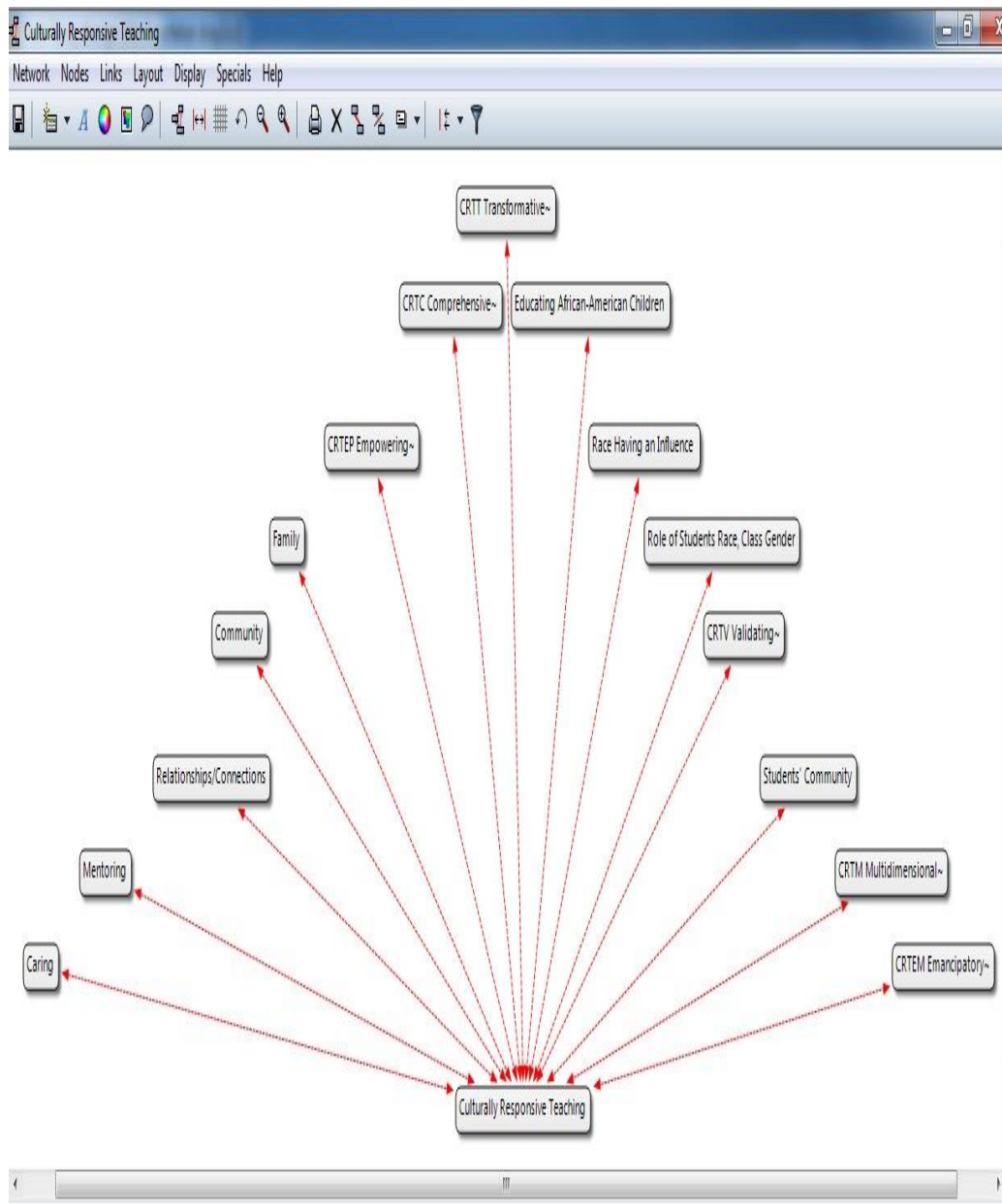
APPENDIX K

Atlas. ti Code Family Network Maps

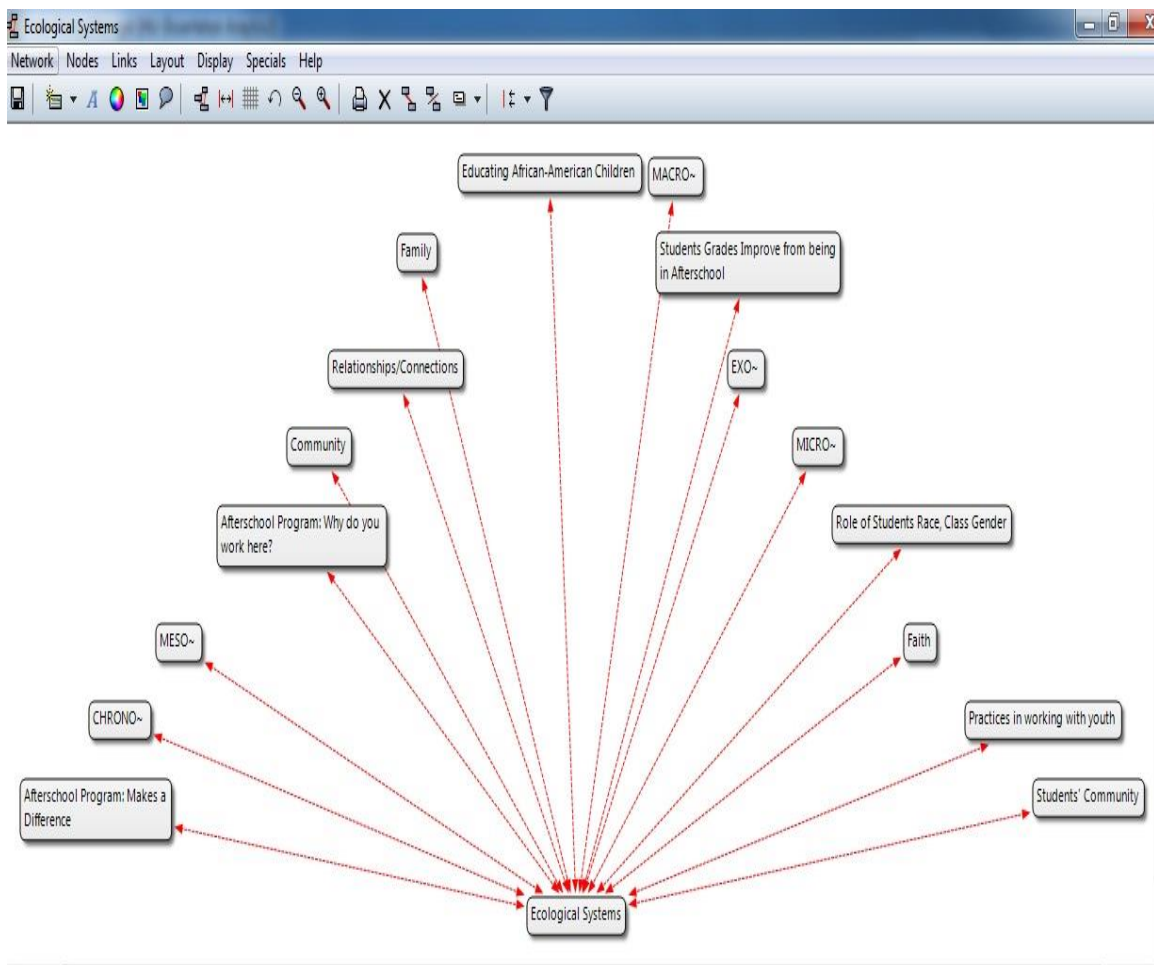
Afterschool Programs



Culturally Responsive Teaching



Ecological Systems



In-Service Teachers' Stories

